Europeans and Africans

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Europeans and Africans

Mutual Discoveries and First Encounters

By

Michał Tymowski

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Cover illustrations: Head of a Benin woman (Benin bronze sculpture, 16th–17th century), source: *Antique Works of Art from Benin,* collected by A.H.L. Pitt-Rivers, London: 1900, plate XIV, from the author's collection.

Back cover: Portuguese musketeer (Benin bronze sculpture, 16th century), source: Antique Works of Art from Benin, collected by A.H.L. Pitt-Rivers, London:1900, plate XIV, fig.85, from the author's collection.

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at http://catalog.loc.gov
LC record available at http://lccn.loc.gov/2020037607

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 2211-1441
ISBN 978-90-04-42011-3 (paperback)
ISBN 978-90-04-42850-8 (e-book)

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Abbreviations

Barros-Cidade	*Ásia. Dos feitos que os Portugueses fizeram no descobrimento e conquista dos mares e terras do Oriente primeira década*, sexta edição actualizada e anotada por Hernâni A. Cidade, notas por Manuel Múrias Lisbon: Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca Agência Geral das Colónias 1945
Barros-MMA 1952	'Ásia' [passages], in: *Monumenta Missionaria Africana, vol. 1: África Ocidental* (*1471–1531*), coligida e anotada pelo Padre António Brásio, Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1952: p. 18–29, 39–43, 53–55, 78–85.
Barros-MMA 1958	'Ásia' [passages], in: *Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Segunda Série, vol. 1: África Ocidental* (*1342–1499*), coligida e anotada pelo Padre António Brásio, Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1958: p. 529–535, 550–559.
Ca da Mosto-Laurent du Tertre	*Les navigations atlantiques du vénitien Alvise da Mosto et la navigation du portugais Pedro de Sintra, écrites par Alvise da Mosto*, vol. 1–2, traduction, édition critique, annotations et commentaires des éditions par Marie-Pierre Laurent du Tertre, Paris: Université de Paris. Typescript of a doctoral thesis submitted at the Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne (original text of Ca da Mosto's accounts according to Leporace, and French translation in vol. 1, 1986: p. 48–166).
Ca da Mosto-Leporace	*Le navigazioni atlantiche del Veneziano Alvise Da Mosto,* a cura di Tullia Gasparrini-Leporace, *Il Nuovo Ramusio*, vol. 5, Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1966.
Ca da Mosto-Milanesi	*Le navigazioni di Alvise da Ca' da Mosto e Pietro di Sintra*, in: *Giovanni Battista Ramusio, Navigazioni e viaggi, vol. 1,* a cura di Marica Milanesi, Turin: Edizioni Einaudi, 1978: p. 461–542.
Delafosse-Escudier	*Voyage d'Eustache Delafosse sur la côte de Guinée, au Portugal et en Espagne* (*1479–1481*), transcription du manuscrit de Valenciennes, traduc-

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	tion et présentation de Denis Escudier, Paris: Editions Chandeigne, 1992.
Marees-Dantzig, Jones	*Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea* (*1602*), translated from the Dutch and edited by Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones, Oxford: British Academy, 1987.
MMA 1952	*Monumenta Missionaria Africana, vol. 1: África Ocidental* (*1471–1531*), coligida e anotada pelo Padre António Brásio, Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1952.
MMA 1958	*Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Segunda Série, vol. 1: África Ocidental* (*1342–1499*), coligida e anotada pelo Padre António Brásio, Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1958.
MMA 1963	*Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Segunda Série, vol. 2: África Ocidental* (*1500–1569*), coligida e anotada pelo Padre António Brásio, Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1963.
Pacheco-Mauny	*Esmeraldo de situ orbis. Côte occidentale d'Afrique du sud marocain au Gabon par Duarte Pacheco Pereira* (*vers 1506–1508*), Raymond Mauny, ed., Bissau: Centro de Estudos da Guiné Portuguesa, 1956.
Pacheco-Kimble	*Esmeraldo de situ orbis*, translated and edited by George H. Kimble, London: Hakluyt Society, 1937.
Pina-MMA 1952	'Crónica de el-Rei D. João II' [passages], in: *Monumenta Missionaria Africana, vol. 1: África Ocidental* (*1471–1531*), coligida e anotada pelo Padre António Brásio, Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1952: p. 8–14, 32–35, 56–68, 112–116, 121–125.
Pina-MMA 1958	'Crónica de el-Rei D. João II' [passages], in: *Monumenta Missionaria Africana, vol. 1: África Ocidental* (*1342–1499*), coligida e anotada pelo Padre António Brásio, Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1958: p. 536–542.
PMA	*Portugaliae Monumenta Africana*, vol. 1–3, 5, Luís de Albuquerque, Maria E. Madeira Santos, eds., Lisbon: Casa da Moeda, 1993–1995.
PMC	*Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica*, vol. 1–6, por Armando Cortesão e Avelino Teixeira da

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	Mota, Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, Casa da Moeda, 1960–1963.
Resende-MMA 1952	'Crónica de dom João II' [passages], in: *Monumenta Missionaria Africana, vol. 1: África Ocidental (1471–1531)*, coligida e anotada pelo Padre António Brásio, Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar: p. 15–17.
Resende-MMA 1958	'Crónica de dom João II' [passages], in: *Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Segunda Série, vol. 1, África Ocidental (1342–1499)*, coligida e anotada pelo Padre António Brásio, Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar: p. 543–549.
Zurara-Beazley	*The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea written by Gomes Eanes de Azurara*, vol. 1–2, translated by Charles Raymond Beazley and Edgar Prestage, New York: Burt Franklin Publishers, 1899.
Zurara-Bourdon	*Chronique de Guinée*, préface et traduction de Léon Bourdon, avec collaboration de Robert Ricard, notes de Léon Bourdon, Elias Serra Rafols, Théodore Monod, Robert Ricard, Raymond Mauny, Dakar: IFAN, 1960.
Zurara-Soares	*Crónica dos feitos notáveis que se passaram na conquista de Guiné por mandado do Infante D. Henrique*, vol. 2, versão actualizada do texto pelo Torquato de Sousa Soares, Lisbon: Academia Portuguesa da História, 1981.

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Introduction

From the year 1434, when the Portuguese first navigated beyond the dangerous waters of Cape Noun and managed to return home, they sailed their caravels further south to explore the coast of West Africa. Contrary to expectations, the European sailors and knights did not find that the earth there was so scorched by the sun that the heat had destroyed all life. In fact, they came to areas – as one of the knights, Diogo Gomes, wrote – 'where the number of peoples is so great that it is hardly believable' – *ubi est tanta multitudo gentium, quod impossibile est credendum* (Gomes 1959: 27).

Upon landing, the Portuguese, Italians in Portuguese service, and other Europeans came face to face with Africans, who found the newcomers just as unexpected. In the 1430s and at the beginning of the 1440s these Africans were chiefly Berbers inhabiting the desert part of the West African coast; the Portuguese called them 'Moors,' as was then usual in the context of the Portuguese (and Castilian) *Reconquista*. From the middle of the 1440s, after navigating to the mouth of the Senegal River, the sailors reached lands inhabited by black Africans. These areas they called 'Guinea,' meaning, as the chronicler Gomes Eanes de Zurara explained, the 'Land of the Blacks,' and the local inhabitants were described as Guineans, although sometimes they were referred to as 'black Moors' (Zurara-Soares: 87, 103, 104, 106).

In this book, I wish to examine how Europeans and Africans, people of such different cultures, reacted to these encounters. What were their feelings and their fears? What excited their admiration, amazement, or curiosity? What aroused their indignation? Why did they take risks in order to get to know their opposites better? How did they fight with each other, and why did they perish? How did they make their first contacts; how did they understand each other; and how did they organize the encounters? How did they choose their meeting places? How and in what areas did they begin to collaborate? What did the Europeans think of the Africans and what did the Africans think of the Europeans? When did the Europeans become aware that African cultures differed, and what did they consider to be the basis of those differences? Similarly, when did the Africans reach such conclusions about the Europeans? I hope that the answers to these questions – and others that will arise during my analysis of the source material – will make it possible to describe the changes of attitude and worldview produced in both Europeans and Africans by their meeting.

Many excellent studies have been devoted to the course of Portugal's expansion in Africa. Among them, works by Portuguese scholars predominate – those by Jaime Cortesão (1930; 1978–1979), Duarte Leite (1958–1960), Avelino

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Teixeira da Mota (1972, 1976, 1978), Vitorino Magalhães Godinho (1944, 1962, 1984, 1990a), José Gentil da Silva (1987), and José da Silva Horta (1991a, 1991b, 2000) are outstanding. Since the Portuguese exploration of Africa is significant in world history, scholars on many continents have studied it. I should mention here the particularly important works of Charles R. Boxer (1969), Peter E. Russell (1960, 1995a, 1995b, 2010), Paul Hair (1992, 1994, 1997), and other scholars, like Bailey W. Diffie and George D. Winius (1977), Thomas F. Earle and Stephen Parkinson (1992), Ivana Elbl (1992), Malyn Newitt (1986), Anthony J.R. Russell-Wood (2013,1st ed., 1994), and Luís F. Thomaz (1990). They have researched the chronology of the expeditions, their organization, and their economic and social causative factors. They have described the expedition organizers and the adventurers who sailed to Africa. The views of Infante Dom Henrique have been the subject of vigorous discussion (Mota 1946; 1947; Nemésio 1991; João 1995; Godinho 1990a; Russell 2001; Elbl 2001). A very interesting work was devoted to the reactions of Europeans to the African environment and climate (Daveau 1969). From these studies we know much about the lands and people the explorers reached.

Many texts concern the motivations and causes of the explorations – political, economic, social, ideological, and religious (Chaunu 1969a; Godinho 1969, 1990a, 1990b; Brásio 1962; 1984; Boulègue 1988; Thomaz 1990; Chadeigne 1990). Among these are valuable discussions by the Polish scholars Marian Małowist and Jan Kieniewicz, and very useful tables drawn up by Silva and Kieniewicz (Małowist 1963, 1964, 1969a, 1969b, 1976a, 1976b; Kieniewicz 1970, 1983: 130–140; Silva 1987: 468–475). There are examples of Brazilian historiography that address questions related to the place of Africa in the 16th- and 17th-century Atlantic world. Of particular interest is research into the transatlantic slave and ivory trades, which is accompanied by analyses of the situation in West Africa in the last decades of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th (Santos 2017; 2018; Malacco 2017; 2018; Mota 2018).

The depiction of black Africans in European art has also been studied. The French scholars Jean Devisse and Michel Mollat wrote the most outstanding work in this area (Devisse, Mollat 1979a, 1979b). The vision of the 'other' – of Africans and the inhabitants of America – has been analyzed by Alfredo Margarido, and changes in Europeans' perception of Africans were studied by Peter Mark and Tarikhu Farrar (Mark 1974; Margarido 1984; Farrar 1992). An exhaustive summary of information and research concerning early European opinions and ideas on the subject of Africans can be found in the works of José da Silva Horta and in the collective volume edited by Luís de Albuquerque et al. (Horta 1991a; Albuquerque et al. 1991). In 2006, the Musée du Quai Branly in

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Paris held an exhibition, with an accompanying catalog and collection of essays (Le Fur, 2006), on Europeans' views of the peoples who inhabited all the newly discovered continents. The majority of these works were written about European figures and actions. In other work, the European presence in Africa and the emergence there of a group of intermediaries – of Euro-Africans and Luso-Africans – has been studied (Silva 1970; Mark 1995, 1996, 2002; Boulègue 1988, 1989; Mark, Horta 2011). Research on the presence of Europeans and their descendants (Euro-Africans) in West Africa, and on the mutual cultural influences between these groups and the inhabitants of the West African coast, has been published by Peter Mark (2002), George Brooks (2003), and José Lingna Nafafé (2007). John Thornton has drawn attention to the erroneously ascribed passive role of Africans in their contact with Europeans, and to the need to study the actions of Africans further in this regard (Thornton 1992). In Poland, Kieniewicz, in his book on colonialism in world history between the 15th and the 19th centuries, also wrote about the need to 'eliminate the division into active and passive parties in contacts' (Kieniewicz 1986: 38). This general remark could obviously be applied to Africans as well.

The observable reactions of Africans to the encounters were described marginally in works on other subjects; they were not treated as a distinct or main research topic. Those publications that concentrated on trade contacts, including the slave trade, tended to cover Africans only in their role in the economy of the 'Atlantic world.' They usually concern the long period between the 15th and 19th centuries (Curtin 1975; Thornton 1992; Brooks 1993; Canny, Morgan, eds. 2011). Today, research on slavery in the transatlantic trade is often combined with studies of the consequent transformation of West Africa, particularly its social history and culture. It includes the work of Toby (Tobias) Greene (2011; 2012) and Walter Hawthorne (2003). The latter examined in great detail the impact of the slave trade on the history of the Balanta people of Guinea-Bissau (2003). The fate of women in the slave trade in Africa is presented in a collective work edited by Claire C. Robertson and Martin Klein (1997). In this volume, John Thornton analyses the impact of the slave trade on African family structure (1997: 39–48). The fate of children is examined by António de Almeida Mendes (2009: 19–34) in a chapter included in the collective work edited by G. Campbell, S. Miers, and J. Miller (2009). Paul E. Lovejoy (1983) wrote about female slaves in trans-Saharan trade. Philip J. Havik (1994, 1997, 2004) dealt with gender issues, principally as they affected African freedwomen traders. Earlier studies of slavery in Portugal were discussed and presented by Charles Verlinden (1955). The excellent work of Alastair C. de C.M. Saunders considers the presence and social role of African slaves in Portugal (Saunders

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1982), as does the work of José Ramos Tinhorão (1988). Interest in the history of black slaves in Portugal has increased recently as evidenced in the works by Jorge Fonseca (2002; 2010; 2014), António de Almeida Mendes (2006, 2008, 2012), Michał Tymowski (2013), and Arlindo Cardeira (2017). Didier Lahon defended his doctoral dissertation on this subject (2001), as did Mendes (2007). Relatively recent publications about the situation of Africans in Renaissance Europe include the collective work edited by T.F. Earle and K.J.P. Lowe (2005).

Against this background, David Northrup's *Africa's Discovery of Europe, 1450–1850*, published in 2002 and updated in 2009, is innovative as it was the first work to present the opinions of Africans, whereas before this publication only the European view of Africans was given. The updated portion of this book indicates how important the African perspective of early contact with Europeans is. Northrup's concise publication encompasses a long period of four centuries, and the issues it raises call for further research. Moreover, it also concerns one side of the contacts, although this time it is the African side, which is the book's asset.

The nature of the phenomenon of cultural contact, the coming together of two sides, is the subject of my book. It is a study within the sphere of 'cross-cultural contacts,' or multicultural contacts. Avelino Teixeira da Mota raised the issue of 'two-way acculturation,' but limited himself to naming questions for future study (Mota 1976, 1978). Some scholars addressed this topic to a more limited extent in the context of trade and diplomacy, but their focus does not exhaust the phenomenon as it relates to culture (Curtin 1984; Elbl 1992; Horta 1994; Nowak 1999; for the later period, see Bitterli 1989). Among the works devoted to the meeting between Africans and Europeans on the Atlantic coast of Africa, the article by Wyatt MacGaffey (1994) occupies a special place. While the author made use of sources from only two areas – Congo and Benin – his theoretical and methodical proposals are of great significance. MacGaffey states that the meeting between the two cultures must be analyzed 'as two-sided rather than one-sided.' Acknowledging that as African cultures of that time were preliterate, and there is an 'absence of documentation,' his view was that researchers must, therefore, approach the study of the opinions of Africans indirectly. MacGaffey considered using oral tradition and Benin works of art (MacGaffey 1994: 249, 252), but he didn't develop these interesting proposals further in his short article and seemed pessimistic about the possibilities of researching mutual contacts – hence 'Dialogues of the deaf' in the title of his article. Despite this pessimistic assessment, in my opinion his article was groundbreaking.

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More recent works on cross-cultural contacts in West Africa include Brooks (2003), Havik (2004), Nafafé (2007), Hawthorne (2010), Green (2012), as well as Horta (2011, 2013) and Horta, Freire (2013).

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Contacts between people of various cultures are one of the great research subjects undertaken by anthropologists. This field of study has introduced several terms for basic types of contact: 'culture clash,' 'culture contact,' and 'acculturation.' These terms do not describe entirely separate phenomena. Their scopes overlap, as in 'clash of cultures,' which signifies primarily the rapidly conflictual nature of the contact. 'Culture contact,' on the other hand, consists in the meeting of two or more cultures and their long-term mutual influences. 'Acculturation,' in accord with the definition in the article by Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, and Melville Herskovits, 'Memorandum for the study of acculturation,' involves 'Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups' (Redfield, Linton, Herskovits 1936; Balandier 1967; Dupront 1967; Quinn 1967; Posern-Zieliński 1987). Thus culture contact is a necessary condition of acculturation. Another condition is the direct and enduring nature of the contact.

In historical and cultural studies, there are many analyses of the significance of the 15th- and 16th-century geographic expeditions in establishing contact between European and non-European cultures (Aubin 1990; Marques 1990; Paviot 1990; Thomaz 1990). Using the example of the Gold Coast, Christopher DeCorse discussed the process of long-lasting cultural contacts (DeCorse 1992). In recent decades the term 'discovery' has been replaced by 'encounter of cultures,' which makes clear the intention to study the views of both sides. Nevertheless, decidedly less space is devoted to Africa in the above studies, which mainly concern the cultures of the Americas, their contacts with European culture, and their mutual influences. It is perhaps symbolic that in these publications the starting point is usually 1492, or more generally and figuratively 1500 (Washburn 1962; Parry 1963; Scammell 1969; Elliott 1970; Ryan 1981; Brandon 1986; Bitterli 1989; M'Bokolo 1995). These works generally cover Africa merely as a source of slave labor and tend to accord only marginal treatment to 15th-century European-African contacts or omit them altogether. One notable exception is the exhibition catalog and collective work under the editorship of Jay Levenson (Levenson 1991). However, in *Facing Each Other: The World's Perception of Europe and Europe's Perception of the World* (Pagden ed. 2000), a very

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interesting collection of scholarly articles from the last few decades, Africa is not only allotted less space than America and Asia but even less than the Pacific Ocean. This oversight is especially unjustifiable because the forms of contact established during the 15th century between the Portuguese and other Europeans, and Africans, did not remain unique to Africa but influenced later communication with people of other continents (Elbl 1992: 166).

In the above-mentioned studies, the phenomenon that interests us is considered in a *longue-durée* framework, usually over a period of four or five hundred years. The question of African-European cultural contacts was approached differently by a group of British anthropologists who published their work in the 1930s in the journal *Africa*. The series of publications was launched with Lucy Mair's program article *The Study of Culture Contact as a Practical Problem* (Mair 1934). In successive publications in this series, the authors described their study of specific, often small – sometimes only village-based – African societies and the changes that occurred in them as a result of culture contact with Europeans (Hunter 1934; Richards 1935; Herskovits 1938; Malinowski 1938, 1939; Methods 1938). This research had a practical aspect – that of assisting the activities of the colonial authorities. It was not only characterized by being limited to small communities, but it was also restricted in time. Moreover, contact was studied only unilaterally, in terms of its transformation of African culture. In my work, what I draw from this is that in certain circumstances cultural contact can be viewed and studied in relation to relatively short periods of time.

In his 1986 book devoted to colonial expansion as one of the major phenomena of world history, Kieniewicz proposed to distinguish the individual phases of this expansion between the 15th and 19th centuries, as: arrival, contact, realization, and consolidation, followed by dependence, underdevelopment, and domination (Kieniewicz 1986: 36, 47, 66, 194, 163). In this study, I will consider the phenomenon of changes in peoples' perception on both sides during the two first phases: arrival and contact. However, in my use of the anthropological terminology I extend the concept of 'culture contact' to all the phases proposed by Kieniewicz, while simultaneously introducing 'encounter' as a phase which occurs after 'arrival.'

In my study of the contacts between Europeans and Africans I take into consideration both the theoretical premises of that method and the practice of researchers. I have selected a timespan of around 70 years: that is, from 1434, when Cabo Noun (perhaps the same cape as Cabo Bojador) was rounded, to the beginning of the 16th century. In this relatively brief period, contacts between both sides occurred unexpectedly, and reactions were still spontaneous and not guided by experience. These encounters were not burdened by the

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influence of pre-existing contacts, opinions, and behaviors. From a psychological viewpoint, the reactions of individuals or social groups that are spontaneous and unaffected by other factors can only last a short time.

I end the study at the beginning of the 16th century for another reason. An important change occurred in Portuguese-African relations then. The rounding of Africa led ships to India (1498), which was followed by the organization of the Estado da India, which decreased Africa's importance in the overseas activities of the Portuguese. Interests connected with India and the Indian Ocean gained primacy. Africa played the role of intermediary and a stage along the route of this new network of interests, movement of peoples, and communication. Thirdly, in the first half of the 16th century the transatlantic slave trade began to develop. Trade in slaves had already existed in fact in the 15th century and I will consider certain of its aspects connected with culture contact. But the colonization of the island of São Tomé at the end of the 15th century, the organization there of slaves to work the sugar plantations, then, from around 1530, the surge in slave transport to America, led to deep changes in European-African relations, including the type of culture contact.

In the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century, European expansion in Africa was led above all by the Portuguese and by Italians in Portuguese service. The Castilians and Flemings attempted to break the Portuguese monopoly, but the Portuguese were able to take effective countermeasures. In the 1530s and 1540s, other Europeans also became engaged in the expansion into Africa: above all the French, English, and Dutch (Blake 1967; Thornton 1992; Canny, Morgan 2011). This changed European-African relations, adding the complication of competition between the Europeans and differences in their attitudes to Africans, and further justifies my endpoint – the beginning of the 16th century.

My aim is to study Portuguese-African contacts on the West African coast from the Saharan section of this coast, to the south of Cabo Bojador, all the way to the eastern reaches of the Gulf of Guinea and the Niger estuary. Various parts of this coast are often singled out in the literature. These are the Saharan coast (Horta, Freire 2013); Senegambia (Karpiński 1968; Courtin 1975; Boulègue 1989; Mark 2002; Barry 1988, 1998); Guinea do Cabo Verde (Mota 1951; Boulègue 1988; Horta 2000, 2011); Sierra Leone (Hair 1974); the Gold Coast (Feinberg 1989; DeCorse 1992); the Slave Coast; and the Five Rivers (Bradbury 1957). From the point of view of contact between the Portuguese and the inhabitants of all these sections, the West African coast was a single and relatively uniform region.

The presence of Europeans in West Africa was limited to the coast until the 19th century. Only the lower, navigable sections of certain rivers (Gambia,

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Casamansa, São Domingos, and Grande-Cacheu) allowed the Europeans to establish a point of contact further inland, with the settlements on the banks of these rivers. Francisco Freire recently wrote about the failed Portuguese attempts to reach the West African interior from the Saharan coast and Arguim (Freire: 2016). Their lack of success in reaching Mali and Timbuktu from Senegambia will be discussed further on the occasion of Bumi Jeleen's (Bemoi's) mission to Portugal. In addition, the presence of the Portuguese in Benin was strictly regulated and controlled by the *obas* (rulers) of Benin. Therefore, it was not only the geographic conditions, but above all the decisions of African rulers and chiefs, that prevented Europeans from operating further inland (Hallett 1965; Curtin 1975: 92–109, 271–294; Ajayi, Crowder 1985: map 54, 55; Nowak 1996: map 1158). Only a few adventurers made it to the interior; they were mostly European fugitives who assimilated with the African people.

The situation was different in many other regions of Africa. On the Atlantic coast, particularly in the Congo River basin (Zaire), the Portuguese had established close diplomatic and economic contacts with the authorities of the Congo state; they were engaged in converting its rulers and dignitaries to Christianity and participated in its domestic politics as advisors and soldiers. Further south, in the second half of the 16th century, they created Angola, a colony whose activities were not solely limited to the coast (Balandier 1965; 1970; Randles 1968; Boxer 1969: 95–103). Similarly, in southeast Africa, they established close relations with the state of Monomotapa (Randles 1975).

Thus, in terms of Portuguese-African contacts in the 15th and early 16th centuries, the West African coast is a separate case from other regions of this continent. In this region, there was a greater balance between the Portuguese and African ability to act independently than in other parts of Africa. This balance may have been due, among other factors, to the simultaneous impact on coastal areas (particularly the Saharan coast and Senegambia) of two external trade areas. The first was the trans-Saharan trading zone (Bovill 1958; Małowist 1964; Austen 1979; Hopkins 1973; Devisse 1972; Tymowski 1974). The second was the Atlantic trading zone that was emerging in the 15th century (Godinho 1962, 1984; Małowist 1969a; Curtin 1975; Elbl 1992; Green 2011; 2012). This gave coastal peoples, especially in the 15th and early 16th centuries, some choice and thus increased their freedom of maneuver and independence from trading partners. This can already be seen in the description of Alvise da Ca da Mosto's journey and his negotiations with the Cayor ruler Budomel (of which more later). Boubacar Barry, in his 1988 book, later published in English, analyses the impact of the two zones on the area of Senegambia and the gradual shift of Senegambian trade toward the Atlantic area (Barry 1988: 5–45; 1998). However, during the period that I am examining in this book, the two options existed

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side by side and there had not yet been an economic settlement in the competition between these trading areas.

The degree to which other parts of the West African coast were influenced by trans-Saharan and West African trade further inland remains debatable. The appearance of Dioula (Wangara) merchants on the Gold Coast (Mina Coast) as soon as the Portuguese arrived there would seem to corroborate the existence of such links (Wilks 1961, 1962, 1982; Goody 1964). The bronze sculptures of Ife and Benin prove that copper was supplied from the north, probably from deposits in the Sahara, at Takedda, or imported through the Sahara from the Maghreb. In Ife, copper sculptures date from the 13th century (Willet 1967: Chap. 1). According to the oral tradition, the beginnings of copper sculpture in Benin took place in the second half of the 13th century. The preserved sculptures are more recent, from the 15th century (Plankensteiner ed. 2007: 46, 272). Thus, from at least the 13th century, Ife and Benin were included in the trading system that encompassed the interior of West Africa.

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The Portuguese wrote of 'Guinea,' without dividing it into Upper and Lower Guinea. Other place names were introduced on the basis of the nature of contacts, the local political organization, or the typical goods to be obtained on a given stretch of the coast – ivory, pepper, or slaves (Ajayi, Crowder 1985: map 29 – Grain Coast, Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, Slave Coast; Delafosse-Escudier: 24, 26, 36 – Mina Coast, 22, 32, 34 – Pepper Coast).

These geographic and economic divisions are overlaid by an even greater cultural and linguistic diversity. The region is inhabited by numerous peoples who differ in culture, language, economic activity, and social and political organization (Baumann, Westermann 1967: 349, 363, 393, maps and civilizational regions 22, 23, 24, 25; Thornton 1992, maps 1, 5). In these regions, the Europeans were thus dealing with not one, but many African cultures. The Portuguese immediately noted the difference in appearance between the Berber Azeneg (Znaga), who inhabited the Saharan coast, and black Africans. The name Azeneg comes from Portuguese texts from the earliest expeditions. It refers to the Znaga Berber group (see Théodore Monod in Fernandes 1938: 150–152, n. 140). Within this group, the Portuguese distinguished between the coastal fishermen (whom they called *Azenegues schirmeyros*) and the Sahara nomads.

The differences went beyond skin color. Very early on, the diversity of languages among the African peoples became a matter of importance for the Portuguese. They were also sensitive to variations in political organization.

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The Portuguese and other Europeans met with and took down many names for the various peoples living on the coast of West Africa, using information given to them by local inhabitants: south of the Senegal estuary they made contact with the Wolof; still further south they encountered the Serer, Mandingo, Wangara (Dioula) and many other peoples. However, not all the information they noted was accurate. For example, the Portuguese referred collectively to several peoples who spoke closely related languages on the Sierra Leone coast as the Sapi (Capi, Çapes). Similarly, on the Mina Coast (the Gold Coast), during the first decades of contact the Europeans had limited knowledge of the names of individual peoples, even though they may have brought with them interpreters familiar with the local languages. In the case of Benin, the Europeans recorded the name of the state, but not of the people who had founded it. The best listing of the names of peoples, their cultures and languages is contained in the works of Valentim Fernandes and Duarte Pacheco Pereira. These were written down at the beginning of the 16th century and summarize Portuguese knowledge about the coasts of West Africa.

The authors of the European accounts paid particular attention to the languages that were spoken by the peoples they encountered. This was due to practical reasons, like the desire to communicate with the aid of interpreters. In this book, I will take into account cultural and linguistic divisions that are noted in texts written in the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. Paul Hair draws attention to the lasting nature of ethno-linguistic divisions on the coast of West Africa (Hair 1967a; 1967b). Walter Hawthorne also relates that, in the 18th century, when slaves from the Upper Guinea coast who had been taken to Brazil were asked about their origins ('what is your nation?'), they 'responded with the name of an ethnic group [...] sometimes with a place such as Cacheu, Geba and Bissau.' On this basis, Hawthorne states that 'ethnic identities were indeed significant' (Hawthorne 2010: 8).

It should be borne in mind, however, that these identities and types of cultural and linguistic ties are not identical to those of the 19th and 20th centuries, even if their languages remained stable (despite natural changes over the centuries) and the names of the groups and peoples have not changed. Contemporary anthropology shows the changing nature of the functioning of these groups and of the mutual dependencies and relations between them (Amselle, M'Bokolo, eds., 1985; Bazin 1985; Wright 1999). According to Jean-Loup Amselle, in the pre-colonial period the cultural space was more open than in the 19th and 20th centuries. In his opinion, there existed chains of societies (*chaînes de sociétés*), and the primacy of relations between societies (*primauté des relations intersociétales*) mitigated divisions between them (Amselle 1985: 23). In contrast, anthropologists claim that the difficulty in overcoming

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'ethnic' distinctions and the onset and consolidation of identities emerged under the influence of various colonial administrations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Dozon 1985).

Hawthorne doesn't deny that 'European colonial policies in the 20th century bring ethnic identities to the fore, hardening them and raising their importance [...],' but goes on to state that 'there is no evidence that Europeans "invented" ethnic identities [...] in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and certainly not before.' According to Hawthorne it is rather the Africans who 'responded to both internal and external forces by defining and redefining identities; to describe their identities as European inventions would be to misunderstand the nature of power in Upper Guinea. Here and elsewhere [...] in Africa ethnic identities were salient from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries' (Hawthorne 2010: 9).

The cultural, linguistic, economic, territorial and organizational (i.e. ethnic) diversity of the peoples of the West African coast is thus an important phenomenon which influenced European-African contacts and is reflected in the 15th and early 16th century sources.

The close ties that had bound the people of West Africa for centuries are no less significant, however. Among the hundreds of languages, there were a certain number that functioned as a *lingua franca*; they were universally known and facilitated inter-cultural understanding. Individual parts of the coast and the interior were connected by trade routes and relations. We have extensive and well-researched testimonials of the existence of trading contacts of an inter-regional character that covered West Africa, information about merchants' itineraries, about the languages that were used to communicate at a supra-ethnic level, and also information about migrations, and about information being shared between the various groups who lived there (Wilks 1961, 1962, 1982; Goody 1964; Małowist 1964; Hopkins 1973; Curtin 1975; Thornton 1992; Brooks 1993). Skills, work techniques, information, and organizational patterns were transmitted along with trade. For centuries there had been influxes of people, not only in the form of mass migrations, but also of traveling merchants, and, in many areas, of wandering Muslim marabouts. That network of contacts makes it possible to treat West Africa, in spite of its internal diversity, as one of the great cultural regions of the continent (Goody 1964; Curtin 1975: 3–91; Perinbam 1980; Swartz, Dumett, eds., 1980; Thornton 1992: 13–21, maps 1 I, 5 I; Brooks 1993: 1–5, 27–47, 49–77, maps 1, 5, 6, 7). Assuming the existence of pre-colonial social ties also makes it possible to treat the West African coasts and their inhabitants as a shared cultural zone. In studying the early contacts between Europeans and Africans, we must take into account this dual nature of the culture of West African peoples – on the one hand the region

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constituted a certain whole and, on the other, it was characterized by internal cultural differences.

There is, however, a problem with using the term 'Africans' (as in 'West Africans') in connection with the period in question. Vincent Mudimbe states that the notion is anachronistic in relation to the 15th and 16th centuries and 'depends on a Western epistemological order' (Mudimbe 1988; 1992; and Herman L. Bennett, 2019: 82–90 for an interesting discussion of Mudimbe's theses). This may be the case in relation to the whole continent, in connection with the long period of African-European contacts, and the gradual formation of African identity. But if one were to examine Portuguese texts from the 15th and early 16th centuries, one would find in them terms that were used to refer to the black inhabitants of West Africa collectively. Gomes Eanes de Zurara used primarily the term *Etiópios*, which derived from the Age of Antiquity. Similarly, the term 'Africa,' used by Zurara for the northern part of the continent (Zurara-Soares: 40, 49, 349, 534), also goes back to Antiquity. The chronicler used the term *Guinéus*, in relation to the black inhabitants of Guinea, which he understood as the area of the West African coast south of the Senegal estuary (Zurara-Soares: 34, 146, 244, 336). The knight, sailor and royal official Diogo Gomes used the terms *Ethiópia Australis* and *Libia Inferior*, as well as the expression *Agizimba*, first used by Ptolemy (Gomes 1959: 13; Sintra 2002: 50, notes 4–7: 126–129). Gomes referred to the Saharan coast of Africa, settled by the Azenegs – Berber fishermen – as *Terra Alta*. However, he was also acquainted with the term 'Africa,' and used the words *Africa vel Libia* in connection with the northern portion of the continent, as was done in classical antiquity. He even opposed the term 'Africa' to the term 'Guinea' (Gomes 1959: 13, 47; Sintra 2002: 52, 82). Ca da Mosto used the collective term *Negri* in writing about the lands of the blacks in Lower Ethiopia – *terra di Negri de la basse Etyopia* (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 5).

Valentim Fernandes used this terminology in the early 16th century, writing of *Ethiopia* and *estas Ethiopias de Guinée* as well as *Guynee* and *Guyneos*. He used the term 'Affrica' when he wrote of Fez or other places in Morocco (Fernandes 1938: 30, 32, 126; Fernandes 1951: 76, 80; *Códice* 1997: 9, 10, 56, 99, 101).

And so, during the entirety of the period under examination in this book, in the descriptions of the European expeditions to Africa, their participants and the authors of memoirs or chronicles added the new term *Guinée* to the terms they had inherited from classical antiquity. They did not use the term 'Africa' in connection with the entire continent, whose dimensions or shape they did not know until the expeditions of Vasco da Gama. In the texts we have mentioned, the first use of this word for this purpose is found in the work of Duarte Pacheco Pereira. In addition to the terms *Ethiopia* and *Guinée* and the expression *estas*

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Ethiopies de Guinée, he used the term 'Africa' in relation to the entire continent (Pacheco-Mauny: 18, 22, 28, 36, 40, 170 note 81). In the event, he did so in reference to the circumnavigation of Africa by the Portuguese and to the best geographical knowledge of the beginning of the 16th century (Pacheco-Mauny: 38, 48). I feel that we can attribute this absence of the term 'Africa' in the texts of the early expeditions to the state of knowledge of the sailors, knights, travelers and merchants sailing to *Guinée*. This is, however, an outsider's viewpoint. It is worthwhile noting that, in medieval cartography, starting with TO (*Terrarum Orbis*) maps, Africa was always presented as one of three continents, even though its area and outline beyond the Mediterranean coast were unknown.

As far as the continent's name is concerned, the process that Vincent Mudimbe called 'the invention of Africa' began, in the case of the European expeditions and the authors of their descriptions, at only the beginning of the 16th century, and lasted through the 16th and the succeeding centuries of the colonial period. Perhaps in the work of Pacheco we can discern the beginning of this process.

In this book, I use 15th-century terms, particularly the terms 'Guinea' and 'Guineans,' only when such terms appear in the European sources of that period. In contrast, I use the term 'Africa' (as in 'West Africa' and 'West African coast') only as a contemporary geographical tool in order to analyze historical material, not as a colonial invention.

But a more important question arises: How did the inhabitants of the West African coast view themselves? It seems obvious that they had no knowledge of the European notions of 'Guinea' or 'Africa.' We can, however, presume that they had a sense of wider ties that encompassed all the region's inhabitants. Thus I use the terms 'African' and 'West African' to refer to manifestations of cultural community among the peoples of West Africa who entered into contact with European arrivals in the 15th and early 16th centuries. A very similar problem exists with the term 'Europeans.' While known in late medieval Europe, the term that was primarily used to describe that cultural community at that time was *Christianitas* (Samsonowicz 1998).

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Studies devoted to the late medieval and Renaissance beginnings of European ethnography and anthropology have also influenced my work, particularly my analysis of European descriptions of Africa and Africans. John H. Rowe in his article *The Renaissance Foundations of Anthropology* best expressed how early descriptions of non-European peoples pioneered ethnographic terms. A fundamental work on this subject was written by Margaret Hodgen. Recently, the

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issue was raised in a collection of reprinted articles edited by Joan-Paul Rubiés. The anthropological content of Portuguese sources was discussed by António A.M. Corrèa in a concise but groundbreaking presentation delivered at the 4th International Congress of the Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Vienna in 1952 (Rowe 1965; Hodgen 1964; Rubiés, ed. 2009; Corrèa 1953).

The written primary sources at our disposal are exclusively European, as are the cartographic sources. The cultures of the peoples of the West African coast were preliterate; information was registered in the memory and transmitted orally. Oral traditions often reach back to distant centuries, often earlier than the 15th century, but they concern the genealogy of ruling clans, the origins of rulers, the genesis of peoples, and sometimes their migrations. Only in a very few cases were the beginnings of contacts with Europeans of interest to the *griots*, that is, traditionalists. DeCorse researched the oral tradition of the peoples of the Gold Coast in this regard, but found nothing in it that could indicate this history had survived (DeCorse 1992). José da Silva Horta found traces of oral tradition concerning the Wolof in texts from the end of the 16th century and from the 17th century, written on the Cape Verde Islands (Horta 2000, 2013). Traces of contacts between the Portuguese and the Berber inhabitants of Western Sahara were also found by Horta and Francisco Freire (Horta, Freire 2013; Freire 2016).

The written sources are in Portuguese, Italian, French, Spanish, German, and Latin. Their fullest and still current presentations were written by Hair (1994b). The presentations of Alan Ryder (1965), and in Poland by Małowist (1964: 25–50; 1969a: 13–30), remain very useful.

The reader will find critical analyses of these sources in individual chapters of this book. Here I will limit myself to general remarks. We are fortunate that the written sources we have access to are varied. They include descriptive works, documents, and also cartographic materials whose authors were Portuguese, Italians, Castilians, Germans, and Flemings. This diversity allows us to compare information and to make critical assessments. In this work, I cite sources in their original language, but also their translation into English. In case of discrepancies between the original and the translation I make the necessary corrections. If no translation is available, I give my own.

Among the descriptive sources, the two main types are expedition chronicles, and accounts or the memoirs of participants. Aside from the lost work of Afonso Cerveira, the earliest chronicle was written by Zurara. I make use of the comment and transcription of this text in the 1981 Portuguese edition by Torquato de Sousa Soares. Its drawback is its panegyric nature (the author is paying honor to the Infante Dom Henrique) and above all its one-sidedness, resulting from the author's partiality to Portuguese knightly culture. Zurara did not take part in expeditions but he scrupulously collected narratives and

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reports. His description is thus indirect. However, a clear advantage of his text is its detailed nature: the chronicle covers 15 years, in which around 22 expeditions took place. Zurara himself commented on the wordiness of his work, writing that:

> although we write some part of their desert, we have not done so as perfectly as they performed it, for the knowledge of a thing can never be so proper by its likeness as when it is known by itself; and yet historians, in order to avoid prolixity, often summarize things that would be far greater if these were related in their true effects (Zurara-Beazley: 126)

> E embora nós, de seu merecimento, algum quanto escrevamos, não é [isso] porém, tão perfeitamente como eles fizeram, porque nunca o conhecimento da coisa pode ser tão exacto por sua imagem, como quando [essa coisa] é conhecida por si-mesma. E [acontece] ainda, [que] os historiadores, para evitarem prolixidade, fazem súmula de muitas coisas que contadas tal como feitas, seriam [consideradas] muito maiores (Zurara-Soares: 229).

Later chronicles are the work of the Portuguese authors Rui de Pina and Garcia de Resende, and the Castilians Fernando del Pulgar and Alonso de Palencia (Pina 1950; Pina-MMA 1952; Pina-MMA 1958; Resende-MMA 1952; Resende-MMA 1958; Pulgar 1943; Palencia 1904–1909). These are also indirect descriptions of events in that they were not witnessed by the authors.

Accounts and memoirs by participants and eyewitnesses of events are a very different sort of descriptive source than the chronicles, and are discussed in detail by Russell (Russell 2009). Such accounts include those of the Venetian merchant Alvise da Ca da Mosto from his two trips, in 1455 and 1456, to Africa, where he went in the service of Henry the Navigator, as well as Ca da Mosto's account of Pedro de Sintra's voyage in 1460. I quote both versions of the Italian original: one from the 1966 edition (Ca da Mosto-Leporace 1966), and the second from the 1550 printing by Giovanni Battista Ramusio, published in 1978 (Ca da Mosto-Milanesi 1978). The work of Ca da Mosto is very valuable due to the author's education, skill in observing his African partners, desire to collect information about them, and lack of prejudice. Another Italian participant in expeditions, the Genoan merchant Antoniotto Usodimare, left only a brief letter sent to his creditors in 1455 (Usodimare 1971, 1993). Both these merchants met in Africa during the expedition in 1456. Another account author was a merchant from Bruges, Eustache Delafosse, who tried to take advantage of Portugal's war with Castile and went to Africa in 1479–1480, in violation of the

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Portuguese monopoly. Delafosse reached what was then called the Mina Coast, and traded in other parts of the West African coast. There are several editions of his account; I mostly used the edition prepared by Denis Escudier on the basis of the original version in Old French (Delafosse-Escudier 1992).

Thus the majority of the 15th-century authors of personal accounts were merchants. The exception was Diogo Gomes de Sintra, presumed to have been born around 1420, who belonged to a group of young people in Infante Dom Henrique's court, who were preparing to take part in expeditions to Africa. In this environment, Diogo Gomes acquired knightly customs. He traveled to Africa several times in the third quarter of the 15th century, at the head of several of these expeditions. Instructed by the Infante to interrupt fighting with Africans and to start trading with them, Diogo Gomes attempted, with varying success, to follow these orders. His career was different from the other expedition participants from Henry the Navigator's circle. Besides the expeditions, he was also involved in administration. He first became a scribe, after which he was promoted to *almoxarife* (administrator of the royal estate) in the city of Sintra. It was as *almoxarife* that he introduced himself in his memoirs of his expeditions to Africa. At the end of his life (around 1484 or a few years later) Gomes dictated these memoirs in Latin to Martin Behaim, a Nuremberg scholar who had come to Portugal to learn of the Portuguese expeditions. The text was preceded by general information concerning earlier expeditions. It is hard to say whether this was part of Gomes's own memoirs, or a scholarly supplementation by Behaim, or by Valentim Fernandes, a printer and historian of the Portuguese expeditions, who wrote down the text (Sintra in *Códice* 1997: 277–309). This is the only copy of Gomes's memoirs that has come down to us. An excellent Latin edition of these memoirs, with a French translation and extensive footnotes, appeared in 1959 (Gomes 1959). I am using this edition as well as a recent one, also based on the Valentim Fernandes codex, but published in the original Latin with a Portuguese translation, with comments and annotated by Aires A. Nascimento (Sintra 2002). While I make use of a great number of this editor's findings and comments, I disagree with his view that Diogo Gomes was not a knight. In my view, he was in equal measure a knight, an expedition participant and commander, and a royal official. In the Middle Ages, knights and noblemen held various offices. The different functions performed by Diogo Gomes de Sintra were not in conflict with one another. However, I believe that his personality was very different from that of the merchants who wrote descriptions of their expeditions to Africa. Diogo Gomes also stood out from other knights in that he was able to dictate his memoirs in Latin.

Interest in the Portuguese expeditions to Africa appears not only in the work of the scholars from Nuremberg but also in accounts of other foreigners'

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journeys to Portugal. The most extensive of these was by Niclas von Popplau, a knight from Breslau and envoy of the emperor, who was in Portugal in 1484 (Popplau 1998). His most interesting remarks concern trade with Guinea and the situation of black slaves in Portugal. At the end of the period of interest to us, Baltasar Springer, agent of the Augsburg house of Welser, traveled to Africa and India. He made brief comments concerning the Guineans in an account supplemented with woodcuts by Hans Burgkmair (Springer 1509).

Among the eyewitness accounts there is also a source that originates in the time beyond our endpoint of the beginning of the 16th century but that is still useful for this study. This was a text written around 1540 by an anonymous Portuguese ship's pilot, describing the conditions he encountered on sailing to Africa, to the island of São Tomé. The pilot, from the port city of Vila do Conde located north of Lisbon, wrote in Portuguese, but his account is known to us solely in Italian (*Navigazione* 1978), having first appeared in a volume of collected travel writings published by Ramusio in 1550 under the title *Delle Navigazioni e viaggi* (Ramusio: 1550, 1978). This text has been translated into Portuguese several times, most recently by Arlindo Caldeira. The publisher estimates that it was written at the end of 1540 or even the beginning of 1541 (Caldeira 2000: 44–45).

At the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century, the first attempts in Portugal were made to summarize the period of the earlier expeditions to Africa. In a sense, the introductory part of Gomes's memoirs was such a recapitulation, as was an account contained in a long letter written in 1495 by another intellectual from Nuremberg, Hieronimus Münzer (Münzer 1854). He arrived in Portugal precisely for the purpose of assessing the expeditions to Africa. In his text he combined personal observations with information about the expeditions he had gathered in Portugal. The most complete summary of the 15th-century expeditions to West Africa, and knowledge about the continent and its inhabitants, is contained in the works of Valentim Fernandes and Duarte Pacheco Pereira. Both texts come from the beginning of the 16th century. The *First Decade* in the monumental work of João de Barros, whose writing began in the 1530s, is also a detailed summary. I have mostly used the edition prepared by Hernâni A. Cidade and the passages in *Monumenta Missionaria Africana* (Barros-Cidade 1945; Barros-MMA 1952; Barros-MMA 1958).

Fernandes was a printer from Moravia, presumably a German. He came to Portugal around 1495 and until his death in 1518 was engaged in collecting information about the expeditions. His work emerged in the years 1506–1510. Fernandes had not been to Africa, but he sought detailed information in the accounts and tales of knights, administrators, sailors, and merchants; he was interested in fauna and flora, but above all in the customs, occupations,

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ceremonies, and beliefs of the Africans. He gathered his descriptions into a manuscript collection of several other texts, now known as the Valentim Fernandes codex (*Códice Valentim Fernandes*). I make use of the two parts of Fernandes's work published in 1938 and 1951 (Fernandes 1938, 1951), and of the above-mentioned *Códice* (1997).

Between 1506 and 1508, at around the same time as Fernandes's work, Pacheco Pereira (ca. 1450–1530) also wrote about Portuguese expansion in West Africa. Pacheco was a soldier, traveler, diplomat, and colonial administrator. He traveled to India, and later, in the years 1520–1522 – after writing his work – he was posted as governor to the castle of São Jorge da Mina. He gave his narrative the title *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* – which could be translated as 'The Emerald Site of the Globe' or 'On the Globe's Emerald Sites.' It describes the West African coast from Ceuta to the Niger delta. Pacheco Pereira made use of the available maps and *roteiros*, that is, texts concerning navigation, to create a summary of Portuguese knowledge about navigating the waters of the West African coast: a kind of navigation guide. Aside from this main aim, however, he included a lot of information about the peoples who inhabited the coasts, their customs, beliefs, and trade with the Portuguese. I quote his work according to Raymond Mauny's edition of 1956 (Pacheco-Mauny).

Joaquim Barradas de Carvalho sees in Pacheco Pereira's text proof of the Renaissance mentality of the Portuguese, which developed at the beginning of the 16th century (Carvalho 1953a; 1953b; 1983). This view is maintained by Vitorino Magalhães Godinho. But Mauny, who edited Pacheco Pereira's text, is more cautious in making such an appraisal and points to the continuity between this traveler's work and 15th-century accounts (Pacheco-Mauny: 9; also Hair 1994b; Fage 1980). This text, along with the work of Fernandes, marks the end of the period from 1430 to the beginning of the 16th century. Thus the works of Fernandes and Pacheco, and especially the *Decadas* of João de Barros, create a context that allows us to better understand the 15th-century accounts and the changes that occurred at the time.

In the literature that concerns accounts of journeys (not only to Africa and not solely in the 15th century) there is a certain trait particular to this type of text. The authors most often noticed what they had anticipated seeing: they saw what they knew they would see. This meant, however, that they did not notice what they did not know about beforehand. According to John H. Elliott 'they saw what they expected to see and ignored or rejected those features of life [...] for which they were mentally unprepared. They found because they expected to find' (Elliott 1970: 17; see also Brandon 1986: 148; Manikowska 2008: 40–52). Freeing oneself from stereotype, to see new and unexpected things, is difficult and rare. In regard to Portuguese descriptions of travels to Africa in

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this period this is precisely what we are dealing with. The travelers saw things that were so new and startling that they had nothing against which they could compare them. Instead, they repeatedly stated that what they had expected, on the basis of the ancient texts and generally accepted views, did not concord with the African reality they encountered. They arrived in entirely new lands and found themselves among entirely foreign people. Of course, the Africans in their encounters with these Europeans were also experiencing something that was entirely new and unforeseen.

The beginning of the 16th century closes this period, and the works of Fernandes and Pacheco, and especially of Barros, which summarise the knowledge that had been acquired, guided travelers of the following decades and centuries as to what to expect.

Portuguese – and also German and Italian – cartography forms a special kind of documentation of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century. The wonderful publication *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica* reflects the knowledge of the Portuguese about Africa and their skill in converting it into maps. It is also an excellent source of Portuguese toponymy, which is significant with regard to the course of culture contact (PMC 1960–1963; Mota 1946; 1950a; 1950b; 1972; Fall 1982; Carvalho 1983; 378–381 (*roteiros*); Hair 1967, 1992; also Cresques-Grosjean 1978).

The narrative texts – from Zurara's chronicle to the work of Barros – contain not only descriptions of the actions and emotions of the Portuguese, but they also inform us about the actions and emotions of the Africans they encountered. Given the lack of written African sources, we have to analyze these texts while remembering the problems that their unilateral views entail. They are a kind of indirect information, reflecting what the Europeans understood and interpreted in the behavior of the indigenous peoples. The Portuguese sources contain, for instance, Africans' comments regarding their aims, their contacts with Europeans, and what they thought of them. Such statements include not only words the chroniclers placed in the mouths of Africans, but also written accounts of talks with them. The credibility of these statements is difficult to assess; a separate analysis is necessary in each case. But in addition, they gain in credibility if they accord with another type of source, such as art, to which I will return.

Aside from narrative and cartographic sources, we have documents – mostly Portuguese, but also papal and Castilian records, and a small number from the chancelleries of other states and cities. These documents have been published in several multi-volume codices and diplomatic collections. Among them, João Martins da Silva Marques edited the three extensive volumes of *Descobrimentos portugueses*; António da Silva Rego, *As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*; and

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António Joaquim Dias Dinis, *Monumenta Henricina* (Marques 1944–1975; Rego 1960–1975; Dinis 1960–1975). The most recent of the collections, *Portugaliae Monumenta Africana* (PMA), was edited by Luís de Albuquerque and Maria Emilia Madeira Santos (PMA, vol. 1–3 and 5, 1993–1995). It contains documents from the years 1443–1510, and thus from the period discussed in this book. In it we find good registers, and information about archival signatures and earlier publications of the documents, if any such exist. Its annotation is modest but better than in older publications. The PMA also contains registers (*regesta*) in French and English by Jean Boulègue and Paul Hair. An interesting description of the problems involved in preparing these registers is contained in an article by the latter (Hair 2000).

Charles-Martial de Witte's edition of papal bulls, which concerns Portuguese expansion in Africa, is important (Witte 1953–1958). Other documents of significance are published in appendices to monographic works. The logs of ships that sailed to Africa are another special type of document; the most interesting for our purpose is the 1526 log of the ship *Santiago* (Mota 1969). Considerable information which concerns trade contacts with Africans is contained in customs books, including the Casa da Mina book of the years 1504–1505 – the sole customs book preserved from the 16th century, and passages of which were published by Mota (Mota 1975).

The above-mentioned written primary sources – the chronicles, accounts and memoirs, documents and summaries, with the possible exception of Niclas von Popplau's account – are well known to scholars of Portuguese expansion. My aim is to analyze these same sources from a different angle – that of cultural contacts between Europeans and Africans. Written sources alone are not sufficient to answer the questions which arise, however.

In order to answer these questions, I have also made use of works of art. Those produced by Europeans representing Africans have been excellently analyzed in the work by Devisse and Mollat (Devisse, Mollat 1979a, 1979b). In spite of very well-conducted archival searches, new, previously unknown works are still being found and made available to researchers: pictures, drawings, and sculptures that present Africans as seen through the eyes of Europeans (Earle, Lowe, eds. 2005: 30, 31, 42, 76). With written sources, there is the previously noted one-sidedness of information as a result of the lack of African texts, but in the field of art there is a balance. Not only Europeans but also Africans expressed their contact with the other through their art. Works of sculpture were made in two regions of the West African coast: in Sierra Leone, where the artists belonged to a group of people whom the Portuguese referred to using the collective term of Sapes – Sapi (Mark 2016: 98; Malacco 2018: 58), which presumably also included the Temne; and in Benin, a state created by the Edo (Bini) people.

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The kinds of artwork of these two regions and people developed independently of each other. Moreover, the social and political circumstances in which the artists worked was different. What was common to both was their reaction – reflected in their art – to the appearance of the newcomers from Europe. The first sculpted images of the Portuguese were created in both Sierra Leone and Benin at the turn of the 15th century. The purpose of the sculptors in both regions, however, was different – a point to which I will return in due course.

The art of Benin has been well studied since the turn of the 19th century; its chronology, manifestations, and social and political functions have been analyzed and commented on (Pitt-Rivers 1900; Luschan 1901; 1919). The most recent summary is the catalog of the Viennese exhibition of Benin art (Plankensteiner, ed. 2007). The Benin artworks that matter for our purpose are the images of the Portuguese. I had the opportunity to become acquainted with these works during visits to museums in London, Vienna, Leipzig, and Paris. Others are known to me from the catalogs of exhibitions, particularly of those organized in recent decades.

In Sierra Leone, however, art developed under different social and political conditions. The peoples there did not have a centralized state. The units of their social organization were large families, clans, or villages (Horton 1971; Tymowski 2009: 117–141). As in Benin, sculpted art existed in Sierra Leone before the arrival of the Portuguese in 1462, but the art of the Sapi group of people was an element of the ceremonies that were connected with their cult of ancestors (Lamp 1983: 219–237). After the arrival of the Portuguese and the establishment of trade contacts with the Sapi group of peoples, ivory became an important export item. In the last decade of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century, a system of orders for ivory sculptures for the Portuguese market was developed. We do not know, however, which side initiated the production. In any case, the purchasers specified the kind of objects that were desired – saltcellars, spoons, knife handles – and the Sapi artists carved them. The themes of decoration of these expensive items changed over time, and on many the sculptures depicted the Portuguese: their caravels, clothes, ornaments, arms, and other accessories connected with social status – as the African artists saw them. The earliest of these are the most valuable for our purpose, as they reflected the observations of the Africans themselves. From the first decade of the 16th century, the artwork of the Sapi group of peoples reflected the interpenetration of the two cultures and the mutual influence of the suppliers and purchasers of these works. Moreover, the form began to be affected by the Portuguese who had settled permanently in Sierra Leone. This later form of art is thus called 'Afro-Portuguese' or 'Luso-African' in the literature (Mark 1995, 1996, 2002, 2007; Santos 2018; Malacco 2018; Mota 2018). Regardless of whether the first part of the name is Afro or Luso, this art is still

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considered to be African. Its specificity lies in the fact that it was created for sale and did not fill a function in the local society other than the obvious one of producing a material benefit. In this it differed fundamentally from the sculpture of Benin.

Sculptures from Sierra Leone can be found in museum collections in Europe and the United States. Many are located in private collections that were created in Europe at the end of the 15th century and blossomed in the 16th to 18th centuries. The scholar who first studied this art was William B. Fagg (Fagg 1959). He was a co-organizer of the important 1988 exhibition, 'Africa and the Renaissance: Art in Ivory,' organized in the Center for African Art in New York and the Museum of Fine Art in Houston. He was also one of the authors of the catalog of the exhibition, prepared with Ezio Bassani and with articles by Susan Vogel and Peter Mark (Bassani, Fagg 1988; see also Curnow 1990).

In using African art as a source, I am aided not only by the literature on the subject, museum collections, and exhibition catalogs, but also Jan Vansina's methodological work, which sets forth principles to guide historians in using this particular type of source (Vansina 1984). The methods by which historians made use of works of art were also written about recently by Peter Mark (Mark 2016). The illustrations I have used in this book will allow readers to become familiar with examples of African art analyzed on an equal footing with written texts.

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In the years 2002–2011, at the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw, I conducted a Master's seminar devoted to Europeans and Africans in the time of the early Portuguese expansion in West Africa. The seminar was attended by students from several University of Warsaw departments, that is, history, African studies, Oriental studies, sociology, and political science. For some of the students, it was a supplementary seminar in which they participated out of a desire to become familiar with new issues and to develop their specialization. All expended considerable effort and brought their enthusiasm to our weekly discussions. I am including two works prepared at the time in the bibliography. I would like to thank all the participants for our talks, during which we learned from each other – my students from me, and I from my students.

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This work first appeared in Polish under the title *Europejczycy i Afrykanie – wzajemne odkrycia i pierwsze kontakty*, Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej,

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Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, Warszawa-Toruń 2017. The chapters about the presence of black slaves in Portugal and about women are based on two of the author's earlier articles, translated by Alex Shannon and Artur Mękarski, respectively (see Tymowski 2013, 2014). The remainder of the book was translated by Jean-Jacques Granas. The translation was financed by the Foundation for Polish Science.

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PART 1

Beginnings

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CHAPTER 1

Fear and Courage

In the last few decades historical research has gone beyond the traditional interests of political, economic, and social history. Historians have added the methods of cultural anthropology to their range of techniques. They have come to reflect on issues of human psychology, and the attitudes not only of particular individuals but also of social groups (Febvre 1941: 5–20; Dupront 1961: 3–10; Duby 1961: 937–966; Mandrou 1968: 436–438; Le Goff 1974: vol. 3, 76–94; Martin 1996; recent findings; Rosenwein 2010). The study of fear and courage, involving cultural anthropology and social psychology, is one of these new areas of interest to historians.

The question of fear in Western European culture from the late Middle Ages to the end of modern times, that is, from the 14th to the 18th century, has been extensively discussed by Jean Delumeau. Because he was studying the whole of Western Europe over the long period of 500 years in his monograph, he could not discuss in detail the question of fear during the first European maritime expeditions, but it is mentioned (Delumeau 1978: 52–53, 63–64). In a brief but excellent description of the first contacts between Europeans and Africans, Jean Devisse and Michel Mollat write of feelings such as surprise and wonder, but not fear (Devisse, Mollat 1979a: 154–160).

Therefore, in this chapter I would like to analyze this phenomenon as experienced by European travelers to West Africa in the 15th century. Like Delumeau, I assume that descriptions of fear often appear in conjunction with descriptions of courage (Delumeau 1978: 13–17). This is characteristic of the source material, particularly of the chronicle of Gomes Eanes de Zurara. I have therefore placed fear and courage side by side in the chapter heading.

The subject of fear on the West African coast in the 15th to 17th centuries was taken up by Tobias (Toby) Green, using the example of the Ribeira Grande, a settlement on the island of Santiago in the archipelago of the Cape Verde Islands, and of Senegambia (Green 2006). His article concerns the community of Portuguese colonists and their descendants who had settled on the island. The author analyzed the social, ecological, and political issues that affect the human psyche over a *longue-durée* scale, more than three centuries, focusing on the causes and, to a lesser extent, the manifestations of fear. While research on the phenomenon of fear is highly developed in European, especially French, historiography, the articles by Toby Green and Michał Tymowski (2005) are

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some of the few examples that explore it within the framework of Africa in early modern times.

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In the narrative sources – Zurara's chronicle, and the expedition accounts of Diogo Gomes, Alvise da Ca da Mosto, and Eustache Delafosse – we find considerable material that concerns the feeling of fear and much evidence of courage. On the other hand, in 15th-century Portuguese documents, the question of fear is not raised: in noting prizes awarded to the explorers the mention of services is general and the likely courage involved is left to the imagination. In order to compare accounts written shortly after the first expeditions with descriptions written from the perspective of the following generation, I make use of the works of Valentim Fernandes and Duarte Pacheco Pereira, which come from the beginning of the 16th century. The latter texts will form a counterpoint to the original sources written in the 15th century.

Fifteen-century sources contain descriptions of the feelings of Europeans who took part in expeditions to Africa. The feelings of Africans are not omitted from these texts, but they are presented briefly and in accord with the ideas of the Europeans. The descriptions were written by people of a non-African culture and we do not know to what degree these indirect testimonies reflected the true feelings of the Africans. To some degree we can examine the feelings of the Africans by considering their behavior toward the Europeans.

The sources above are quite varied in how they deal with fear, and have been described by Paul Hair (1994b: 89–100). Zurara honors the achievements of Infante Dom Henrique, and has left us a description of conquest that glorifies the acts of Portuguese knights. The chronicle breaks off at the year 1447 (Hair 1994b: 89–92; Bourdon, Introduction in Zurara-Bourdon: 7–35). Zurara said that he would write a second part of his chronicle, but he never did, doubtless because trade did not interest him.

Zurara worked on the basis of Cerveira's chronicle (lost today) and the accounts of participants in expeditions. We do not know to what extent the participants' narratives can be considered true, and whether – in speaking of fear – they were being honest or glossed over the feelings and behaviors that in their opinion were not praiseworthy. As Delumeau writes, fear is often connected – albeit unjustly – with cowardice (Delumeau 1978: 13–14, 18–20). Fortunately for us, describing acts of courage requires acknowledging danger and fear.

The account written by Ca da Mosto has an entirely different character. Ca da Mosto was a Venetian merchant. Henry the Navigator's envoys persuaded

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him to embark on an expedition to Africa in the service of the Infante, who wanted to limit pillaging and develop trade with the Africans. Ca da Mosto performed his task excellently. He traveled to Africa twice, in 1455 and 1456. In the land of the Wolof he established close ties with Budomel, the ruler of Cayor. He then sailed further south, reaching Cape Roxo and the Cacheu River.

Ca da Mosto wrote his account in 1463, after he was allowed to leave Portugal, and immediately upon his return to Venice (Verlinden 1958: 467–497; Leitão 1961: 1–21; Ca da Mosto-Laurent du Tertre: vol. 1, 6–43, 166–202; Hair 1994b: 98–100). His work is the direct record of his own experiences and observations, motives, and feelings. Furthermore, Ca da Mosto carefully observed the Africans. Having come into personal contact and engaged in talks with them, he learned more about them than other explorers did (Laurent du Tertre 1988: 477–484). He wrote his account from memory although he may have had some notes from his journeys. For all these reasons, Ca da Mosto's testimony has a high degree of credibility as far as our subject is concerned.

Diogo Gomes, a Portuguese knight and court official, traveled to Africa several times, in the years 1445–1446, 1456, and 1459–1460. On the second expedition, he reached the Rio Grande and sailed up the Gambia River. During the third voyage, he encountered peoples living on the banks of the Joal River. His entire account was dictated in Latin at the end of his life and written down by Nuremberg scholar Martin Beheim (Hair 1994b: 92–93). The part of Gomes's text that is most valuable with respect to the study of fear and courage is the eyewitness account. However, the length of time that lapsed between the expeditions and the writing down of the work remains in question. Feelings and impressions could have become blurred or been forgotten.

In 1479–1480, Eustache Delafosse (de La Fosse) reached the Mina Coast but was captured, transported to Portugal, and sentenced to death for infringing on the Portuguese king's monopoly on trade with Africa. He managed to escape and returned to Bruges at the beginning of 1481. Doubtless it was then that he wrote a kind of trade report for his patron (Russell 1976: 209–221; Hair 1994b: 101; Delafosse-Escudier: 85–145). His report concerns above all matters of trade, but doesn't describe its young author's sentiments.

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Before beginning to analyze the feelings of fear and courage on the basis of the above materials, let us consider the definition of fear in accordance with the findings of psychological research.

Fear is an emotion reflecting a state of threat; it is a reaction to an immediate danger. It is manifested in initial immobility, enlarged pupils in wide open

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eyes, higher blood pressure, and increased levels of adrenaline and glucose in the bloodstream. Escaping from fear involves either flight from it or aggression toward the source. Psychologists differentiate fear from anxiety. The latter is a reaction to danger that exists in the imagination, that is, in the absence of a threatening situation or stimuli. Anxiety thus appears without direct threat. However, in distinguishing between fear and anxiety, psychologists point out that there is no clear dividing line between the two (Sillamy 1980: 894; *Grand dictionnaire de la psychologie* 1991: 570–571; Reber 1985 (1995), anxiety, fear; see also Delumeau 1978: 26–38).

Whereas fear is explained, in encyclopedias and dictionaries of psychology, the definition of courage is hard to pin down, perhaps because of its very subjective nature. Let us then take the common, intuitive definition, which considers courage to be the ability to face a danger, in spite of the risk.

In selecting material on fear and courage from the sources I decided to use two criteria. Firstly, I took into account all the instances where the words 'fear' or 'courage' appear. Secondly, I chose those passages in which the behavior of people explicitly indicates that they were prey to fear or gave proof of courage. In the first case, this is an inductive method, and in the second a deductive one. Some of the source passages, particularly those containing atypical information, I have analyzed individually. Information of a common or repeated type I have analyzed using a uniform research questionnaire.

Of course, all people experience the feeling of fear. There can be no doubt that the European explorers felt it, as did the Africans on their unexpected encounter with the newcomers. I thus intend to examine not only the feeling of fear in individual cases, but also the causes of that fear, the social and cultural background in which it arose, the various ways in which people responded to it, and how they managed to overcome it. This brings us to the study of courage and its social and cultural background. In the questionnaire, I address the issue of the durability of fear and the circumstances of its passing and recurrence.

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In the eighth chapter of his chronicle, entitled *Why ships had not hitherto dared to pass beyond Cape Bojador* (*Por que razão não ousavam os navios passar além do Cabo do Bojador*), Zurara described what people felt before undertaking an expedition to Africa:

> there was not one who dared to pass the Cape of Bojador and learn about the land beyond it, as the Infant wished, And to say the truth, this was not

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> from cowardice or want of good will, but from the novelty of the thing and the wide-spread and ancient rumour about this Cape, that had been cherished by the mariners of Spain [meaning the Iberian Peninsula] from generation to generation. And although this proved to be deceitful, yet since the hazarding of this attempt seemed to threaten the last evil of all, there was great doubt as to who would be the first to risk his life in such a venture. How are we, men said, to pass the bounds that our fathers set up, or [what benefit will the Infante have from the squandering of our souls, similarly to our bodies, because it is clear that we would be committing suicide in this manner?] [...] [It is after all certain – the sailors continued – that beyond the Cape there are neither people nor any inhabited place. The land there is no less sandy than the deserts of Libya, where there is neither water nor tree nor any green grass. The sea is so shallow there that a mile from the coast the depth does not exceed a cubit. The ocean currents are so strong that no ship that rounds the Cape has managed to return. For these reasons our ancestors never tried to go beyond it.] (Zurara-Beazley: 30–31).

> nunca foi algum que ousasse passar aquele cabo do Bojador, para saber a terra de além, segundo o Infante desejava. E isto, por dizer verdade, não era com míngua de fortaleza nem de boa vontade, mas por a novidade do caso misturado com geral e antigua fama, a qual ficava já entre os mareantes de Espanha, como se por sucessão de gerações. E já seja que fosse enganosa, porque a experiência de isso ameaçava com o postumeiro dano, era grande dúvida qual seria o primeiro que quisesse pôr sua vida em semelhante aventura. Como passaremos – diziam eles – os termos que puseram nossos pais, ou que proveito pode trazer ao Infante a perdição de nossas almas juntamente com os corpos, pois conhecidamente seremos homicidas de nós mesmos? [...] Isto é claro – diziam os mareantes – que, depois deste cabo, não há aí gente nem povoação alguma; a terra não é menos arenosa que os desertos de Líbia, onde não há água, nem árvore, nem erva verde; e o mar é tão baixo que, a uma légua de terra, não há de fundo mais que uma braça. As correntes são tamanhas que navio que lá passe jamais poderá tornar. E, por isso, os nossos antecessores nunca se entremeteram de o passar (Zurara-Soares: 67–68).

In keeping with the definitions used in psychology, this passage is describing not fear but anxiety, that is, a reaction to an imagined danger. It was a collective anxiety, experienced by all people who thought of traveling to Africa and sailing beyond Cabo Bojador. This anxiety was passed from generation to

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generation. In addition to the real dangers, such as ocean currents and shallows, imaginary threats appeared. Potential travelers worried about finding a desert devoid of people or plants; they feared not only death but also the loss of their souls. Would that not be the penalty for a suicidal act? The medieval idea of the *ecumene* surrounded by ocean waters reflects these anxieties. Those who sailed beyond its boundaries risked forsaking their souls. Our supposition is confirmed by Diogo Gomes's text. In describing these same anxieties, the impossibility of sailing beyond the cape called Noun, and ideas about the unknown areas, Gomes refers directly to the ancient, Ptolemaic image of the world accepted in the Middle Ages and to the conviction that the south of Africa was empty and that the heat there destroyed all life. In reminiscing at the end of the 15th century, Gomes added that these anxieties were overcome through experience (Gomes 1959: 25–27).

There are many contradictory hypotheses about the location of Cabo Noun. For some scholars it is identical with Cabo Bojador (as in Zurara's text above). Most hold the view that it is a distinct cape, located near Bojador. Others believe that it was located at a considerable distance to the north (Russell 2001: 317–318). Its name appears in the bull of Nicholas V of 8 January 1455 in the Latin form of 'Nam,' and in the document of Infante Dom Henrique of 26 December 1457 as 'Naam' (*Descobrimentos portugueses* 1944: vol. 1, 554; PMA: vol. 1, No. 15-1455, and No. 23-1457). Diogo Gomes de Sintra gave the name 'Caput de Non' in Latin and 'Cabo de Não' in Portuguese (Sintra 2002: 50–51). I use the spelling 'Noun' in English after Peter Russell (2001: 438 and *passim*).

As Zurara's chronicle and Gomes's text attest, the general anxiety produced by an expedition into the unknown was overcome. However, the memory of that anxiety lasted long after the causes had been eliminated and after the successes of the expeditions to Africa. Not only Gomes wrote of it, but so did Ca da Mosto (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 6–7). This anxiety was still remembered in the beginning of the 16th century, although it was known by then that it was unfounded. It was mentioned by Fernandes, obviously under the influence of Zurara's chronicle (Fernandes 1951: 40). Pacheco Pereira wrote similarly about the difficulties of sailing beyond Cabo Noun (Pacheco-Mauny: 20, 24). Thus, anxiety entered the legend of the exploratory expeditions and became the backdrop to the courage of the explorers.

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Other information about fear does not concern large social groups but members of a given expedition and the Africans they encountered. But even the entire crew of a given caravel cannot be treated collectively. The sources

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eloquently testify to differences between the groups that formed those crews, and how they experienced fear and combated it. The manner of reacting to fear was conditioned not only by an individual's traits but also his social status.

Zurara glorified the courage of the caravel commanders and individual knights who, in the earliest phase of the expedition, had gone on land and attacked the local populations (Zurara-Soares: 73, 78, 138, 172, 181, 222, 240, 258, 342–345, 429, 488). These were exceptional acts. The chronicle details the disputes among the knights and caravel crew over landing and over sailing further south. Some of the knights and crew members insisted on going back after the first plunder was taken and the first slaves were captured (Zurara-Soares: 126, 234–237, 247, 288, 307, 377, 504). The commanders had to rouse their men to show courage. Zurara wrote down numerous speeches they made to try to persuade the members of the expedition who were unwilling and resistant to take part in what they knew, by then, to be dangerous actions (Zurara-Soares: 84, 117, 127, 135, 185, 293, 326, 329, 504). It can be imagined that these people felt some anxiety about the outcome of the protracted expedition.

The caravel commanders, along with those knights who yearned for fame and plunder, landed on subsequent occasions, presumably overcoming their fear. They often drew along with them other knights, who were less determined and more prone to fearfulness but who followed their commanders. Zurara gives the statements of some of those who hesitated but followed the call of duty and obeyed (Zurara-Soares: 234, 247, 288, 388). Even so, some of the knights remained on the caravel (Zurara-Soares: 258).

The feeling of fear and reacting to it depended to a certain measure on individual traits. To a larger degree it was formed by the expectations of the group to which the person belonged. The knights were governed by the codes connected with chivalry, and the chivalric ethos that obliged a man to show courage and bravery, to demonstrate the ability to overcome his fear.

The crew members (sailors, not knights), on the other hand, did not have to exhibit such bravery. They knew they could not count on fame, honor, or enrichment as a reward. Therefore, they often insisted on avoiding risk and on an early return (Zurara-Soares: 307, 377). It can be surmised, then, that fear and reactions to fear differed depending not only on the personalities of those on the expeditions, but also on their social position, the ethos of the group to which they belonged, their place in the ship's hierarchy, and the honor and benefits they could expect.

The conclusions that can be drawn from Zurara's chronicle are confirmed in Ca da Mosto's account. The Venetian merchant and the captains of his first expedition were forced to return by the crew, who were terrified by the Africans'

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attacks on the caravel. Ca da Mosto was so impressed by their refusal that he mentioned it again when writing about his second expedition (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 85, 91).

The social division of knights and caravel crew was not the only one that influenced how fear was experienced by the Europeans. There was also the social division of knights and merchants. The authors of the two accounts I have analyzed were merchants. Their attitude to fear and courage was very different from that of Zurara and Gomes. Ca da Mosto, although he left an account full of personal impressions, turned out to be unusually reserved with regard to the issue of fear and courage. When the Africans, determined not to establish contact with the Europeans, killed the interpreter they had sent to them on land, he wrote of the feelings of stupefaction and astonishment (*stupefati e atoniti*) the event produced in him; he wrote of it as a terrible thing, but he did not use the word 'fear' (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 78). It is true that, following the interpreter's death, Ca da Mosto and the caravel commanders decided at once to sail away from that dangerous place. The cause could have been fear, but it could also have been the entirely different aims of the merchants' and the knights' expeditions. Ca da Mosto was supposed to establish peaceful trade relations with the Africans (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 11–13, 48–49, 84; see also Brulez 1968: 311–326). From this viewpoint, fighting with the local people and taking revenge for the death of the interpreter would have been fruitless. In this case, it was clear that the prospects for peaceful contact were not good. Sailing away seemed the most sensible thing to do and was not necessarily an expression of fear. Ca da Mosto engaged in fighting only when it could not be avoided. Then he wrote about the feeling of fear that prevailed among the participants of his expedition (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 80–84).

As a merchant, Ca da Mosto did not strive to show courage; he desired to distinguish himself by the effectiveness of his actions and by success in trading. He did not expect praise and honor, he wanted to turn a profit. There is not the least doubt that the feelings of fear and courage were not foreign to him, but they did not affect the organization of his activities. He tried rather to weaken the dependence of his actions on fear and on the need to display courage.

A similar explanation could be given in regard to Delafosse's account. Delafosse reached those parts of the African coast that the Portuguese knew and where trade with the Africans had already begun. It was the Portuguese rather than the Africans who might have caused him to be afraid. When he was captured and deprived of his freedom, he wrote of the difficult conditions of his imprisonment but did not mention feeling fear (Delafosse-Escudier: 28–30, 36). Perhaps this was due to his aim in writing the account. It was a report for his

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superior; he was supposed to describe the conditions of trade and explain the reasons for the loss of goods, not give expression to his own feelings.

In conclusion, how fear was experienced and courage was manifested by the expedition participants depended above all on their social position. The knights dealt with fear differently from the crew members and the merchants. The first sought to give evidence of their courage; for the others this was meaningless, which does not mean that they were not brave. It is only in the context of such social differentiation that we can see the individual traits of the people belonging to each of the groups.

We know much less about the fear and courage of the Africans. Although the question of social conditioning is very important in trying to understand the actions of the Europeans, the European accounts do not address what governed the behavior of the Africans of different social groups. The authors of the chronicles and accounts lacked detailed information; they described the behavior of the local people on the basis of what they could observe. The exception is the work of Ca da Mosto, who was more insightful than others.

Above all, the Europeans noticed a difference in attitude between the Berber people of the desert coast of West Africa and the black population of the coast to the south of the Senegal River. The coastal Berber-Azenegs engaged in fishing, and their occupation provided them with a modest means of subsistence. Their groups were not numerous and their villages were scattered across the territory (Fernandes 1951: 52–54; Mauny 1961: 231–234, 239, 272–273, 465–466; Monod 1983: 15–17, 48). The Azeneg were armed with spears and shields made of tortoiseshell, which gave them no chance in a fight with the Portuguese. Therefore, the Azeneg would fight as a last resort only. Their typical reaction to a Portuguese attack or news of the approach of the Portuguese was fear, terror, and panicked flight (Zurara-Soares: 110, 121, 198, 222, 241, 322, 376–377). Zurara's chronicle provides numerous descriptions of emptied villages, of the abandonment of the sick and elderly, of a panic that caused people to leave their families behind. In several instances, however, we have testimony to the unusual courage of individual men who, in the hopes of giving the women and children time to escape, attempted the unequal fight with the attackers, and perished (Zurara-Soares: 93, 380–381).

On several occasions the Berber inhabitants of the coast combined their forces with groups of nomads from the interior desert and successfully resisted the Portuguese (Zurara-Soares: 251, 266–267). The decision to draw the newcomers into an ambush and to do battle proves that the Berbers overcame their fear and summoned the will to fight. These were exceptions, however, because attempts to collect a large group of warriors from among the scattered fishers and nomads rarely succeeded.

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After passing the mouth of the Senegal, Europeans quickly became aware of the difference in the situation and attitude of the local people there. The coast was densely populated by numerous black peoples (Zurara-Soares: 172; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 39–40; Gomes 1959: 24, 26). Between Senegal and Cabo Verde they encountered the Wolof, who had several state organizations; further to the south were the Serer people, organized in chiefdoms; and on the Gambia and Casamansa, they met the Mande and other peoples under the political influence of the state of Mali (Zurara-Soares: 535–536; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: about the Wolof 41–43, 49–50, 75–76, about the Serer 79–82, about Mali and Casamansa 64–66, 71–72; Boulègue 1987: 102–107; Tymowski 1991: 131–142; Levtzion 1973: 94–97; Cissoko 1969: 325–336). Their numbers and the existence of state organizations and chiefdoms allowed these peoples to defend themselves successfully against Portuguese attacks.

Zurara writes about the amazement of the Africans on the sight of a caravel, but also about how they overcame their fear when they understood that there were people on board (Zurara-Soares: 176–177). The chronicler repeatedly writes about the Africans' courageous engagement in organized battle, about ambushes on shore, and of boats full of warriors surrounding and attacking the caravel (Zurara-Soares: 243, 419–421, 435–436, 483–485, 494–495, 542). The same is confirmed in Gomes's account (Gomes 1959: 28, 30). On being surprised, individuals might decide to fight, including women who had been attacked (Zurara-Soares: 339–342, 495).

Ca da Mosto's account contains the largest number of observations concerning the attitudes of the black population. The Venetian merchant observed the Africans carefully, wanting to know and understand them. The Wolof, in the times described by Zurara, around 1445–1447, had already taken arms against the Portuguese (Zurara-Soares: 542). During Ca da Mosto's expedition among the Wolof, fear and brave resistance had been replaced by a desire for trade (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 49). But when Ca da Mosto sailed further to the south, to the lands of the Serer and on the Gambia, he met with resistance and reluctance. On the Gambia, the Africans who surrounded the caravels with their boats were terrified by the sound of the cannon and the accurate aim of the crossbows. However, they quickly managed to control their fear. They fought by maneuvering their boats and raining arrows on the Europeans (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 78–80, 82–84).

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In the course of the 15th century, the causes for fear changed. In the period before the expeditions, the Portuguese experienced anxiety about various dangers suggested by their imagination. During the expeditions, they gradually

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became acquainted with Africa. But for a long time, beyond the areas they had reached, there lay other, more distant territories, which remained unknown, threatening, and strange. What was unknown still produced anxiety. Unexpected events were also feared in areas that had already been explored. In going on land for plunder, the Portuguese were most afraid that the number of opponents could be too great.

Ambushes and subterfuge were feared above all (Zurara-Soares: 125–126, 173, 186, 221–222, 234–237, 252–253; Gomes 1959: 28). After reaching the lands that were inhabited by black Africans, the fear of poisoned arrows was added to the fear of a large number of enemies (Zurara-Soares: 306, 419, 436, 486, 496). In Gomes's and Ca da Mosto's accounts, the Africans are accused of cruelty on account of those arrows (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 76, 80, 82; Gomes 1959: 28, 30, 40). Everything that could cause death was feared.

Zurara's chronicle, strongly imbued with the chivalric ethos, is a testimony to another kind of fear, or rather anxiety, not mentioned by the other authors. The knights were afraid of shame; they were afraid to return without plunder, to be ridiculed for bringing back less than previous voyagers had (Zurara-Soares: 91, 118). What is surprising, however, is that in Zurara's chronicle there is no mention of worries about the difficulties of navigating or about diseases. A list of such fears is provided by Gomes's and Ca da Mosto's texts. The former, in a passage devoted to his own experiences, described his fear of storms, currents, and dangerous shoals (Gomes 1959: 32). Both authors were afraid of ailments: attacks of fever, diarrhea, and the inability to withstand the heat (Gomes 1959: 40; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 87, 96, 102).

As I have mentioned, the European authors noticed how the Africans were afraid of the caravels on account of the crossbow arrows and the sound of the cannons (Zurara-Soares: 300, 364; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 29, 83, 97). The Azeneg were terribly afraid of being attacked unexpectedly and taken into slavery (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 27, 28). Ca da Mosto notes an interesting statement by people who lived on the banks of the Gambia River. The black Africans, in reacting to attempts to establish contacts with them, declared that they already knew about the newcomers and about their kidnapping or buying slaves and transporting them into the unknown. They supposed that those slaves were eaten; thus they refused any sort of contact with the Europeans and were determined to kill them (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 85).

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Fear was a feeling that both sides – the Africans and the Europeans – had to expect and manage. The sources reflect both how fear was overcome and controlled, and how this feeling, which had supposedly been mastered, could

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return. Zurara, in glorifying the courage of the Portuguese knights, emphasized one reaction to fear – to sail bravely toward unknown lands, attack the local people, and plunder. The reaction to fear that was praised by the chronicler was aggression. Aside from these acts of courage, another reaction, hidden in the background of the account, can be seen.

This was flight from the land back to the safety of the caravel, or even back to Europe, when the danger and fear became too great (Zurara-Soares: 158–159, 258, 285). In several drastic incidents, when the knights who had gone on land were attacked by superior forces, the flight was so panicked that those fleeing abandoned their companions to their death (Zurara-Soares: 263–268). As for Ca da Mosto, on principle his reaction to danger was to withdraw, although this may not have been due exclusively to fear but also to commercial calculation (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 78, 84).

The reactions of the Africans are relatively well presented in the European sources. Among the Azeneg, as we know, the typical reaction was flight, although several times attempts to defeat the attackers were organized. The abandonment of whole villages by the Azeneg became so widespread that the Infante Dom Henrique feared that the coast would become deserted, and he ordered the establishment of trading contacts (Zurara-Soares: 105–106; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 21, 22, 27, 28; see also Thomaz 1989: 50–52). The black populations further south, initially surprised and frightened by the appearance of the Europeans, managed to overcome their fright rather quickly and to begin either to fight or to negotiate and trade (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 83).

The reasons for damping down fright varied on both sides. The Portuguese knights wanted to serve the Infante Henrique, squires hoped to be knighted, both groups sought to cover themselves in glory, and finally to get plunder, receive prizes, and enrich themselves (Zurara-Soares: 90, 116, 156, 175, 208, 318, 534). Zurara mentions the Order of Christ and the use of the banner of the Crusade (Zurara-Soares: 78, 94, 308). The chivalric aspect of expeditions has been described by numerous scholars (Mota 1946; Małowist 1964: 11–40; Leite 1958: 17–22, 79–96). Godinho, on the other hand, stresses the significance of trade and merchants (1944: 19–27, 74–120). The merchants avoided conflict, but their decision to sail to Africa and go on land there, risking their life or freedom, also testifies to courage and the conquest of fear. Equally, among the African population, overcoming fear did not exclusively involve attacking the Europeans. Even in the earliest stage of contacts, some Africans went bravely onto the caravels, without guarantees of safety, in order to become better acquainted with the newcomers (Zurara-Soares: 158, 434, 509, 539; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 97). Some of those who were taken hostage later made successful attempts to escape. Others were set free, once an agreement was reached and

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hostages were exchanged. There is the instance of a certain elderly Moor who voluntarily traveled to Portugal, and that of João Fernandes who went on land and spent seven months among the nomads. Both returned from their risky expeditions, which required no small amount of courage (Zurara-Soares: 170, 179–180, 189–192, 445–450). The motive in such cases was curiosity and the desire to know the other side – a subject to which I will return later.

The strongest reason for the Africans for casting fear aside and ceasing to refuse contacts was the desire to engage in trade. On first encountering the Portuguese in the 1440s, the Wolof took arms against the newcomers. But by the time Ca da Mosto reached the Wolof in 1455, trade had already been established. The Venetian was supposed to develop trade, not to initiate it. The state organization of the Wolof enabled them to do battle successfully but it also helped them to negotiate or trade with the Europeans. As both sides came to know each other better, the fear passed and was replaced by various forms of contacts and by collaboration (Zurara-Soares: 434; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 49, 100; Gomes 1959: 24, 28, 42, 52; Godinho 1969: 188–190; Małowist 1969a: 128 *et seq*.; Boulègue 1987: 102–104; 1988: 311–326; Brulez 1988: 311–326; Thornton 1992: 43–57).

At times the fear returned, however; Zurara's chronicle contains a dramatic description of one such incident. On becoming acquainted with the coast settled by the Azeneg and having confirmed that their resistance was weak, the Portuguese ceased to be afraid to land and attack the local peoples. Furthermore, if there was a dearth of plunder in the lands inhabited by black people, the returning caravels headed for the coast of the Azeneg. It was expected that the prey would be easy there. The members of an expedition in 1444 were the more astonished then when they were drawn into an ambush on one of the islands near Arguim. Several of the Portuguese were killed; the rest fled in the caravel, abandoning their companions to certain death (Zurara-Soares: 263–268). Their opponents, who had become familiar and no longer seemed frightening, had again become threatening and terrible. When other ships arrived from Portugal with the intention of avenging the fallen, the frightened knights from the unfortunate caravel refused to disembark and take part in the battle (Zurara-Soares: 287–288, 307).

Successive victories in plundering expeditions were thus not an effective means for a lasting elimination of fear. There was always the danger of being caught in an ambush, of losing a battle, of incurring injury or death. The fear that accompanied journeys to Africa would pass only when peaceful, regular, and mainly trading contacts were established.

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A particular trait of the fear felt by both sides during the first European expeditions to Africa was the transiency of the situation and its exceptional nature. With mutual acquaintance, certain of the original causes of fear and the circumstances in which it was experienced disappeared. In works from the beginning of the 16th century, there are no accounts or even mentions of the fear that the first explorers experienced in going on land and encountering Africans. Valentim Fernandes mentioned poisoned arrows without the least emotion (Fernandes 1951: 11, 23, 27, 51, 95), as did Pacheco Pereira (Pacheco-Mauny: 79, 87). The type of fear that accompanied the first expeditions was foreign to a large part of the succeeding generation. For Fernandes or Pacheco Pereira and their readers, the subject was not exciting or even interesting. Only the anxiety about the unknown that had preceded the expeditions came to form part of the legend (Fernandes 1951: 40; Pacheco-Mauny: 24–26). It was sufficient to provide a context for the courage of an entire generation of explorers. In the 16th century, new causes and circumstances which induced fear appeared.

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CHAPTER 2

Death and Attitudes to Death

Portuguese explorers to Africa in the 15th century certainly experienced thoughts of death, imaginings of death and fear of death. We know that they weighed the danger and deadly risk of these expeditions before they embarked on them. The chronicler Gomes Eanes de Zurara wrote of sailors who contemplated the circumnavigation of Cabo Noun (which Zurara calls Bojador in that part of his chronicle), thus: 'since the hazarding of this attempt seemed to threaten the last evil of all, there was great doubt as to who would be the first to risk his life in such venture' (Zurara-Beazley: 31; Zurara-Soares: 67–68; see full quote in Chapter 1, p. 31). Sailing past this cape, and along the deserted, depopulated and unfriendly coastline, would be – the sailors strongly believed – suicidal, because of the climate and because until the use of the caravel, which enabled them to sail upwind, they could not return home.

The caravel made the return trip possible. The Portuguese sailed past the dreaded cape and learned how to sail back home. As Diogo Gomes recalled, the lands and peoples the explorers reached were other than had been thought (Gomes 1959: 27), but death did indeed turn out to be a constant companion. People died on account of the climate, the difficulties of sailing, and many other reasons they could not have imagined before the expedition began. Death came to both sides, European and African.

My purpose is to describe the events that resulted in death and to analyze attitudes toward death, reactions to death, the causes of death for both the Europeans and Africans, and the consequences of the death of an individual or group for those who remained alive. I have adopted the approach of historians and anthropologists to discuss death in terms of people's attitudes to death and cultural interpretations of death (Huizinga 1954: 138–151; Tenenti 1952, 1957; Aries 1974, 1975; Vovelle 1976: 120–132; Chartier 1976: 51–75). As in the case of all manifestations of early European-African contacts, it is much harder for us to understand and analyze the phenomenon from the African perspective than from the European. There are descriptions in the chronicles and accounts of the deaths of Africans, but the European authors did not analyze – because they could not – the consequences of these deaths for African society, nor the manner in which Africans experienced the deaths of people close to them, nor the ways in which they were commemorated. However, in spite of the one-sidedness of the source materials, these descriptions still contain some valuable information (Tymowski 2014b).

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In the earliest period of Portuguese expeditions to Africa, particularly in the decade in which the circumnavigation of Cabo Noun was begun (1434), the expeditions were military in nature. They were led by knights and squires from Henry the Navigator's entourage who wanted to acquire fame and the recognition of their patron, as well as war spoils. Initially, the expeditions were considered an extension of the *Reconquista*, the continuation of the Christian battle with the Moors, and even as a sort of crusade (Zurara-Soares: 308; Małowist 1964: 11–40). The knights landed from caravels, attacked the local people, took their goods and took them into slavery. In these battles, both Portuguese and Africans perished.

In 1436, two of the Infante's squires landed on the Rio de Oro (to the south of Cabo Bojador). They were members of an expedition led by captain Afonso Gonçalves Baldaia, and were supposed to take a prisoner to serve as a source of information for the explorers. They saw and attacked a group of 19 persons. In the fight, one of the squires received a spear wound in the leg and the other wounded one of the Africans, but they did not succeed in capturing anyone. These events were described by Zurara (Zurara-Soares: 76). It is characteristic of Diogo Gomes to claim that in revenge for the wounding of one of the young men, the second had killed the African (the 'Saracen,' as he wrote) (Gomes 1959: 17). Thus in the later description, the services of the brave squire were magnified. Gomes considered the killing of an opponent to be highly laudable and preferable to a mere wounding. The alteration in the description of the events reveals the views of the knights who took part in the expeditions. Killing an opponent was seen as proof of military prowess and as worthy of commemoration. Zurara's description, therefore, seems more credible than Gomes's. But, in a later part of the chronicle, Zurara relates numerous instances of attacks on Africans and the killing of them. If killing was not the chief aim of the attackers, it was the inseparable consequence of falling upon Africans for the purpose of robbing them and abducting them into slavery.

In 1441, Nuno Tristão, after reaching the Rio de Oro, led a group of knights to land. The Portuguese moved off at night and came upon a camp of sleeping Berber nomads. They surrounded the camp and attacked with cries of 'Portugal' and 'Saint James.' The surprised nomads defended themselves with their spears. Nuno Tristão himself engaged in hand-to-hand combat with one of them, who fought bravely and did not give way until he was killed. Three others were also killed, and 10 Africans – men, women, and children – were taken into captivity. Zurara considered that:

> it is not to be doubted that they would have slain and taken many more, if they had all fallen on together at the first time (Zurara-Beazley: 48).

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> E não há dúvida que outros muitos mais não morreriam ou prenderiam, se a eles todos acertassem juntamente ao primeiro topo (Zurara-Soares: 93).

Among Nuno Tristão's 10 companions, the bravery of Gomes Vinagre, a youth from Infante Dom Henrique's court, was particularly worthy of mention. It is thought that he may have been Diogo Gomes, who later wrote down his reminiscences about the other expeditions (*Pereira* 1900*: 268 et seq.;* Zurara-Bourdon: 85, footnote 2). Gonçalo de Sintra, a squire, also showed much courage. He was later killed during a fight with the Moors on the island of Tider. I write more about him later on.

The following Portuguese expeditions proceeded in similar fashion. In 1443, during an expedition led by the same Nuno Tristão to the south of Cabo Blanco (Branco), near the island of Arguim, the Portuguese came within sight of 25 boats. At the approach of the newcomers, the Africans in the boats began to flee in such haste that in the confusion several were drowned. Others, the Portuguese managed to take into captivity (Zurara-Soares: 110). In 1444, an expedition led by Lançarote and Gil Eanes attacked a camp of Berber fishing people, the Azeneg, on one of the islands in the bay of Arguim. The fishermen, seeing the strangers, ran out in front of the huts with the women and children. The Portuguese,

> shouting out St. James, St. George, Portugal, at once attacked them, killing and taking all they could (Zurara-Beazley: 66).

> E eles, chamando 'S. Tiago, S. Jorge, Portugal' deram sobre eles, matando e prendendo, quanto podiam (Zurara-Soares: 121).

The Azeneg fled in fright; some drowned in the sea. Zurara comments as follows:

> And at last our Lord God, who giveth a reward for every good deed, willed that for the toil that they had undergone in his service, they should that day obtain victory over – their enemies, as well as a guerdon and a payment for all their labour and expense; for – they took captive of those Moors, what with men, women, and children, 165, besides those that perished and were killed (Zurara-Beazley: 66).

> E emfim, Nosso Senhor Deus, que a todo bem dá remuneração, quis que, pelo trabalho que tinham tomado – por seu serviço, aquele dia cobrassem

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> vitória de seus inimigos, e galardão e paga de seus trabalhos e despesas, cativando de eles – entre homens e mulheres e moços – 165, afora os que morreram e mataram (Zurara-Soares: 121).

Hunting for humans continued during the expedition, and cost further mortalities among the Azeneg. Near the island of Tider, the Portuguese attacked a dozen or more boats full of people:

> and, moved with pity, although they were heathen who were going in these boats, they sought to kill but few of them. But it is not to be doubted that many, who in their terror forsook their boat, perished in the sea [...] they took fourteen; so that those who were captured in those two days, apart from some who were killed, were in all forty-eight (Zurara-Beazley: 73–74).

> E ainda, que infiéis fossem os que nas almadias vinham, poucos deles quiseram matar. E não é, por isso de duvidar que muitos que, com seu medo, desamparavam as almadias, no mar não perecessem [...] dos quais tomaram 14. E assim, pod todos os que aqueles dois dias cativaram (afora alguns que morreram) foram 48 (Zurara-Soares: 133).

Gil Eanes encouraged his crew to further their efforts. More prisoners were caught, but then the Portuguese encountered the resistance of around 300 'Moors' and after that battle they stopped hunting. The caravels sailed to Cabo Blanco, where they captured Azeneg again 'apart from some who were killed' (*afora os que morreram*). Having so much advantage in armor and fighting skills, none of the Portuguese perished (Zurara-Soares: 138–140), but their plundering raids and snatching of slaves caused many deaths among Africans, who were killed in battle or perished in flight.

Zurara writes that he was glad of the baptism of those Africans who were transported to Portugal and of the saving of their souls. He noted, however, that many of them soon died, since:

> their bellies began to swell, and for a time they were ill: until they were accustomed to the nature of the country; but some of them were so made that they were not able to endure it and died, but as Christians (Zurara-Beazley: 85).

> começavam de lhes crescer os ventres e, por tempos, eram enfermos até que se reformavam com a naturaleza da terra, em o que alguns deles

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> eram tão compleicionados que não podiam suportar e morriam, todovia cristãos (Zurara-Soares: 151).

Death in Portugal was often the fate of slaves, even those who were very well cared for, not only on account of the different climate and food, but also because of their psychological state and despair (Zurara-Soares: 146–147, 149). The crew of the caravel captained by Dinis Dias, part of an expedition of many caravels in 1445, caught a youth and his sister by the Senegal River. The boy was offered to Infante Dom Henrique, who had him baptized, instructed in the faith, and taught to read and write. The boy was so gifted that:

> many Christians there be who have not this knowledge as perfectly as he had (Zurara-Beazley: 179).

> E ainda muitos cristãos há que as não sabem tão perfeitamente como ele as sabia (Zurara-Soares: 339).

The Infante wanted to send him back to Africa with a Christian mission, but the youth died before reaching maturity.

After a period of surprise attacks, the Portuguese raids in Africa began to meet with organized resistance. In 1444, the Infante Henrique placed the above-mentioned Gonçalo de Sintra at the head of an expedition. Zurara devotes a separate chapter of his chronicle to his death (Zurara-Soares 155–162). De Sintra's task was to reach as far as Guinea, that is, to the 'Land of the Blacks' (*Terra dos Negros*).

However, after reaching Cabo Blanco, he decided, against the advice of his companions, to capture slaves. He headed the caravel to the island of Arguim, but the locals had been forewarned. The Portuguese found the village abandoned, except for a single girl. They moved on to the neighboring island of Tider. The expedition's interpreter, a slave of Azeneg descent, took the opportunity to flee to his people. Thus the Azeneg were not only forewarned, they were given exact information about their adversaries. Only they didn't believe what the runaway interpreter told them, so one bold fellow went to the caravel and gave it to be understood that he wanted to sail to Portugal. He was kept under guard but during the night he managed to escape and was able to confirm the interpreter's story. In spite of these events, Gonçalo de Sintra, accompanied by 12 of his best men, took a boat to one of the islands. The stay on the island was extended due to the incoming tide. When the tide turned, the Portuguese attempted to return to the caravel, but were suddenly attacked. The fight, according to Zurara, was unequal.

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> The enemy were 200 in number and our men but twelve, without hope of succor, they were very easily overcome (Zurara-Beazley: 91).

> porque os inimigos eram duzentes e os nossos, doze, sem esperança de secorro, foram ràpidamente desbaratados (Zurara-Soares: 161).

The Portuguese fought bravely, causing losses among the enemy, but they could not overcome the enemy's advantage. Gonçalo de Sintra and seven of his companions perished. Zurara gives the names of four of them: they were Infante Henrique's two pages, Lopo Caldeira and Lopo de Alvelos; his stirrup-bearer Jorge; the caravel's pilot, Álvaro Gonçalves; and three nameless sailors from the ship's crew. Zurara added:

> I wish to make no difference between them, for they all died fighting, without one of them turning back a foot; and although the youths of the Household and the equerry knew how to swim and so to escape, yet they would never abandon their captain, but they bravely received burial around him (Zurara-Beazley: 91).

> Não quero fazer diferença, que todos morreram pelejando sem tornar, nenhum, pé atrás. E inda que os moços da câmara e assim o outro, de estribeira, soubessem nadar, nunca quiseram desamprar seu capitão, perto do qual virtuosamente receberam sua sepultra (Zurara-Soares: 162).

Zurara did, however, treat the fallen very differently, in omitting the names of the sailors, men of a lower social position. He ends his description of the deaths of these eight people with a sentence of Latin prayer: *Habeat Deus animam quam creavit et naturam quod suum est* (Zurara-Soares: 162; Zurara-Bourdon: 116, footnote 3). From other sections of the chronicle, we know that de Sintra did not know how to swim. And so, only five of the party managed to return to the caravel. After such losses, the caravel returned to Portugal.

The same events were described somewhat differently by Diogo Gomes. According to him, Gonçalo de Sintra and his companions landed on the island of Tider and attacked the 'Saracens-Azeneg,' who ran away in panic. Gonçalo de Sintra, pursuing some women, ran into the water, where they threw mud at him until he couldn't see. Then the men fell upon him and killed him. The remaining Portuguese returned to the caravel and sailed home (Gomes 1959: 23).

The differences in the descriptions of these events would seem to be less important than the similarities. In both cases, we are dealing with the narrative of the death of specific people, mentioned by name. Zurara mentions

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several of them; Gomes remembered only the leader. No one noted the names of the sailors.

Gonçalo de Sintra's death made a large impression on the chronicler, but the fallen knight did not fit the category of model hero. He did not follow Infante Henrique's instructions; he preferred to capture slaves than sail to Guinea. At the Infante's court, the causes of this setback and the death of the leader and seven members of the expedition were analyzed. Zurara collected and quoted the conclusions that were drawn. According to the chronicler, it was necessary to: follow instructions; keep guard over hostages and interpreters; not trust strangers – regardless of the reasons given for their visit to the caravel; listen to the advice of one's companions; not go on land if it was known that the enemy had precise information; and finally, pay attention to the tide, particularly if one didn't know how to swim (Zurara-Soares: 163–167).

These conclusions did not protect the Portuguese from further losses. The next expedition in 1445 proceeded like the earlier one. Slaves were caught and those who resisted were killed (Zurara-Soares: 218, 236–238, 255). However, after some initial successes, the expedition ended in defeat. The Portuguese sailed by boat to the island of Tider, landed and spread out over the terrain, seeking people to take hostage. They were then attacked by a number of Berbers, who were well prepared for battle. The Portuguese retreated toward their boats and in the panic some of the men managed to sail away in two boats, but the third boat, which had been pulled up onto the shore, could not be pushed into the water. Those who knew how to swim rushed into the ocean and escaped. Abandoned by their comrades, the seven who remained on land perished in the fight (*Zurara-Soares*: 264–268). The chronicler prays for their souls, expresses his sorrow, and reminds his readers that the cause of their death was their lack of caution, but he does not mention their names. He calls instead for vengeance (Zurara-Soares: 269–272, 287–288).

The response to this defeat was an expedition of 14 caravels sent out under the leadership of Lançarote. After hesitations and consultations, the 'Moors' were attacked on Tider. The expedition was very well armed: the company of more than 300 men had bows, crossbows, pikes, and, of course, swords. They also had a crusader banner (*Zurara-Soares*: 308). The Portuguese dispersed the group of Africans they encountered. Some of the Africans escaped by swimming, eight were killed, and four were captured. Among the Portuguese, heavy wounds were received by a 'man from Lagos,' who had wanted to distinguish himself and attacked the enemy a bit too boldly. He died on the ship, on the way back to Portugal. Zurara prays for him thus: 'May the Lord God receive his soul into the company of the saints' (Zurara-Beazley: 165); *Cuja alma o Senhor Deus receba na companha dos Santos* (Zurara-Soares: 310).

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Another group of caravels set off a little later, and also attacked the Moors of Tider. The Africans fought very bravely, because they fought:

> in defence of their women and children, and still more for the salvation of their own lives (Zurara-Beazley: 170).

> por defesa de suas mulheres e filhos, e muito mais por salvar suas mesmas vidas (Zurara-Soares: 319).

Twelve Africans died in the fight, others were forced to flee. In the pursuit many more were killed, and 57 were taken prisoner. After this victory, the plundering of the villages and killing of resisters began (*Zurara-Soares*: 321–323).

Thus in 1445, the center of Berber opposition (the Azeneg fishing people – *Azenegues schirmeyros*, perhaps supported by the Znaga nomads of the Sahara) could be said to be the area around Arguim, and particularly the island of Tider. The first Portuguese fell in battle there, even though more Africans than Portuguese were killed.

During one of the expeditions to the Saharan coast inhabited by Berbers, an event of such cruelty occurred that it made an impression even on Zurara, who usually accepted the death of locals as a natural consequence of the expedition. The Portuguese landed in the vicinity of the cape called at the time St. Anna, halfway along the coast between Arguim and the mouth of the Senegal. They captured a number of prisoners and started to lead them away, but one woman refused to walk, threw herself on the ground and resisted even though she was pulled by the hair and legs. It was decided to tie her up and come back for her the next day, after the hunting for slaves was over. It turned out, however, that the crew did not have enough time to return for the woman, and she was left in the wilderness to a certain and cruel death (Zurara-Soares: 413–415).

By means of Nuno Tristão's expedition to the 'Land of the Blacks' and Dinis Dias's expedition to Cabo Verde in 1444, the Portuguese first reached coasts inhabited by sub-Saharan black Africans (Zurara-Soares: 171–177; Mota 1947: 315–316). Following them, Gomes Pires, after a raid in the vicinity of Arguim, decided to sail there. This opened a new chapter in the Portuguese encounter with Africans. The black Africans who lived south of the mouth of the Senegal were much more numerous than the Azeneg and better organized, into chiefdoms and states (Boulègue 1987: 37–75; Tymowski 2009: 10–11, 128–135). They could thus put up much stiffer resistance to the attacking Portuguese. The Portuguese noted the better armed 'Guineans' and the strong build of their bodies – which made them very dangerous in battle (Zurara-Soares: 175–177,

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244, 340–344, 417–419, 435–436; Gomes 1959: 27, 29). These Africans fought both collectively and individually; even the women defended themselves, evoking admiration for the strength and determination of their resistance (Zurara-Soares: 495–496). But most important was the fighting organization of these people, their ingenious operations, and ambushes (Zurara-Soares: 420, 425, 427). In the face of such organized defence, the Portuguese often withdrew without fighting (Zurara-Soares: 365–366, 418, 427–428). They met, too, with a new danger, from poisoned arrows, which evoked considerable fear (Zurara-Soares: 365–366, 418–419, 436, 496–497; Gomes 1959: 29). Abducting people from the 'Land of the Blacks' was more dangerous and less fruitful than from among the Azeneg. Among those who perished were Nuno Tristão, in 1446, and the Danish knight Valarte, in 1447. Zurara devotes considerable space to these events, describing them in great detail.

The chronicler bids farewell to Nuno Tristão, one of the most outstanding captains of the early period of expeditions, with unusual emotion. It is probable that Zurara was making use of a report of the unfortunate expedition of 1446 drawn up by Aires Tinoco, the ship's writer on Nuno Tristão's caravel (Coutinho 1949: 1–4; Dias 1949: 407; Duarte 1952: 645–654; Bourdon in Zurara-Bourdon: 237, footnote 1). The report was official in character, but Zurara supplemented the text with the expression of his sentiments.

> And of a surety I could not pass it by without tears, did I not know, almost by divine forecast, the eternal delight his soul tasteth, for it seemeth to me that […] it hath pleased God to make a sharer in His immortality (Zurara-Beazley: 252).

> A qual, por certo, eu não poderia passar sem lágrimas, se não soubesse quase por divina consideração eterno descanso que recebe o seu espírito, pois me parece que […] a morte daquele que a Deus prouve fazer participante da Sua imortalidade (Zurara-Soares: 483).

According to Zurara, in life Nuno Tristão was a 'noble knight.' He was very familiar with the desires and intentions of Infante Dom Henrique, as he had been raised at court since childhood. After telling of the knight's death, Zurara writes of his immortal soul and of the heavenly praise deserved by all who died in Africa in the service of God. The introduction to the chapter on Nuno Tristão's death is a valediction to the knight, a testimony to his earthly services and immortal fame, and an expression of hope for his reward in heaven. Only after this part, does the detailed description of the expedition begin (Zurara-Soares: 484–491; Mota 1946: 22–65).

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Nuno Tristão, after sailing around Cabo Verde, reached the mouth of a river which has been identified as the Saloum. Two boats were dropped into the water from the caravel, 22 people climbed in, and they travelled up the river. They had not yet reached land when they were surrounded by 12 boats carrying around 70 or 80 Guineans – probably Serer, from the Niominka group of fishermen – armed with bows and arrows. One of the boats got ahead of the Portuguese and landed on the bank, and the occupants then shot at the Portuguese from the shore. Other boats surrounded the Portuguese on the water. The Portuguese were in danger of poisoned arrows from all sides. Four died in the boats; others, including some who were injured, made it back to the caravel. But the arrows kept coming so thickly that they couldn't draw anchor to sail away. In the end, the anchor line was cut, the empty boats were abandoned, and the caravel escaped. Of the 22 in the boats, only two survived. The rest died from the poisoned arrows,

> for that poison was so artifully composed that a slight wound, if it only let blood, brought men to their last end (Zurara-Beazley: 254).

> porque aquela peçonha era tão artificiosamente composta que, com pequena ferida, desde que aventasse sangue, trazia os homens ao seu derradeiro fim (Zurara-Soares: 486).

Among the dead were Nuno Tristão and the knights João Correia, Duarte de Holanda, Estevão de Almeido, and Diogo Machado – all nobly born, young and raised at Infante Henrique's court, 'and seamen and others of the ship's company,' *e depois mareantes e outra gente do navio*.

Of seven men who remained on the caravel, two were wounded when they tried to raise the anchor and died shortly thereafter. Only five on the caravel survived, and two from the landing boat's crew. The group included a young auxiliary sailor who was not very skilled in the art of sailing; Infante Henrique's page, the above-mentioned Aires Tinoco, who was acting as ship's writer; a young Guinean, who had been enslaved at some time and was participating in the expedition; and two very young boys, assistants to the fallen squires. The bodies of the dead, including that of Nuno Tristão, were thrown into the sea. Headed by the two inexperienced youths (the auxiliary sailor and the writer) the seven men sailed for two months, and, in spite of enormous difficulties, managed to reach Portugal. They brought Infante Dom Henrique news of the death of Nuno Tristão and the other members of the crew, which caused him great sorrow. Zurara consoled himself and his readers with the thought that between being buried on land or in the sea, where the body finds its grave 'in

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the bellies of fish,' there is no difference. On Judgment Day, it is our deeds that will count. Referring to the papal bull of 19 December 1442, which granted a pardon to those who perished in Africa, Zurara expressed his certainty that Nuno Tristão's soul would be saved (Zurara-Soares: 488–490).

During the next expedition, in 1446, Álvaro Fernandes reached Cabo dos Mastos, between Cabo Verde and the mouth of the Saloum. This was territory settled by the Serer who had killed Nuno Tristão. The Portuguese approached a village and the inhabitants came out preparing for battle. Among them was a warrior distinguished by his stature, armed with a spear and a large shield. Álvaro Fernandes guessed that the man was the village chief, and decided to kill him. He attacked the man suddenly, piercing him with his lance. He then took the man's shield and spear, and later brought them to Infante Dom Henrique as a trophy. But the Portuguese did not dare attack the village itself, and returned to the caravel. They then sailed along the coast and reached the mouth of a river that is harder to identify, probably the Casamansa (Bourdon in Zurara-Bourdon: 242–243, footnote 4). As usual, they set off by boat up the river, but were attacked by several boatloads of Guineans. Afraid of poisoned arrows and spears, they fled toward the caravel, but when one of the African boats got ahead of the others in pursuit, the Portuguese turned about and attacked. In the fight, Álvaro Fernandez was wounded in the thigh. By then experienced in being inflicted with such wounds, he quickly pulled out the arrow and washed the wound with urine, and then with olive oil and an antidote he had with him. Although he was sick for several days, he did not die (Zurara-Soares: 493–497).

One other expedition, composed of nine caravels, set off for Africa in 1446. Several of the caravels sailed to the mouth of a river situated to the south of Cabo Verde. It might have been the Gambia, or even the Casamansa (Bourdon in Zurara-Bourdon: 246, footnote 8). Fifteen men landed, with Diogo Afonso at their head. When the adventurers pushed into the dense forest, they were set upon by Guineans armed with bows and arrows and spears. Five Europeans were killed on the spot, among whom – as Zurara notes – were two Portuguese and three foreigners. Two men were wounded. The chronicler does not mention any losses on the African side. One of the captains of the caravels, an experienced participant of other expeditions, came to the aid of the combatants. The Portuguese retreated, fighting as they withdrew. Zurara lists the names of four other knights whose actions were worthy of mention in this struggle. The danger was so great that it was decided to return to the caravel,

> and there remained the bodies of the death men, among the thickness of the trees, and their souls departed to see the things of the other world;

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> and may it please God, if they are not yet in His holy kingdom, to take them to Himself (Zurara-Beazley: 265).
>
> Ali ficaram os corpos daqueles mortes entre a espessura daquelas árvores; e as almas foram ver as coisas do outro mundo, as quais a Deus praza que, se ainda não estão no Santo Reino, que as leve para Si (Zurara-Soares: 504).

The chronicler's lofty hopes contrast with the sad but pragmatic necessity of abandoning the bodies. The fallen were certainly not prominent members of the expedition, since Zurara does not even give their names, concentrating instead on those who fought successfully and got away with their lives (Zurara-Soares: 503–504).

The expedition's participants, wanting to avenge themselves for the defeat, decided to attack the 'Moors' on the way back, and took 48 prisoners in the area around Arguim. One of the caravels sailed to the Canary Islands, where two women were seized. A battle ensued in which Diogo Gonçalves particularly distinguished himself, killing seven Canary Islanders with a crossbow, including one of their 'kings.' One of the two captured women died on the caravel before the ship reached Portugal (Zurara-Soares: 504).

In the final chapters of the chronicle, Zurara describes the Portuguese attempts to establish trading contacts with the Africans. This change in approach had been recommended by Infante Henrique, who saw a lack of prospects for further plunder (Zurara-Soares: 527–528; Gomes 1959: 25; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 11–13). These attempts were initially unsuccessful. Trade was often begun, but it happened that battle erupted nevertheless. During one of these conflicts, a Portuguese crew member was heavily wounded and died a few days later on the ship, on the return voyage (Zurara-Soares: 365–366, 508–513, 530).

Another victim of conflict with the Africans was the Danish knight Valarte, who had come to Portugal to fight against the Moors in Africa. With Henry the Navigator's approval, he went to Africa in 1447. His caravel reached the land of the Niominka-Serer on the Sine-Saloum River (Mota 1946: 298–301). There had been bloody fighting in the area earlier, and Valarte had been given the task of making peaceful contact with the local chief or king. The failure of the negotiations led to the death of Valarte and of many sailors of the Portuguese crew. The captain of the caravel, Fernão Afonso, decided to return to Portugal at once.

In spite of the detail of the description, Zurara noted only the name of Valarte and of the captain, who did not die. The others who perished remain nameless (Zurara-Soares: 533–543; Tymowski 2008a: 61–74). The name of the

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Danish knight and the circumstances of his death were also given later by Diogo Gomes and João de Barros (Gomes 1959: 31; Barros-Cidade: 63–65).

The catastrophe that befell Valarte's expedition ends the information in Zurara's chronicle about the deaths of Portuguese and other Europeans in their service and about the deaths of Africans during the early Portuguese expansion between 1434 and 1447. A comparison of Zurara's chronicle with the descriptions of other early expeditions and the narratives of their participants testifies to its one-sidedness. Zurara gives a great deal of information to us, but it concerns almost exclusively death as a result of battle between Europeans and Africans. He gives us only a few pieces of information about the deaths of slaves who were overcome by their afflictions.

In the narrative and reminiscences of the knight Diogo Gomes, who actually took part in expeditions to Africa, other causes for death are given besides battle. Gomes does indeed admire and praise the plunderers, and writes about those who fell (Gomes 1959: 29, 31). The killing of an opponent was a service worthy of recognition. But he adds other causes of death in Africa – diseases and the unbearable climate – which Zurara doesn't mention at all. Gomes describes in detail the expedition in 1456 on the Gambia and Rio Grande in which he himself participated (Gomes 1959: 33–45; Mota 1946: 470–492 [rivers' identification]). It was a time of trade, and not of battle. According to Gomes, tensions had eased even among those African chiefs and rulers who were known to have killed Portuguese crew members previously (Gomes 1959: 31, 35, 43). During Gomes's expedition, two caravels anchored close to the mouth of the Gambia; he, on a third caravel, sailed up the river to Cantor, the last place reachable by caravel before the rapids (Mota 1946: 481–484). The trade, talks and collecting of information lasted a fairly long time, most likely a week or two. People on Gomes's vessel were very tired from the heat, and so his caravel sailed back toward the remaining two. When they reached them, they found that on one, nine people had died, the captain was very ill, others were ill, and only three persons were healthy. On the other caravel, anchored closest to the mouth of the river, five people had died (Gomes 1959: 41).

Caravels were small ships and their crews numbered 20 to 30 persons (Chaunu 1969: 284–288; Zurara-Soares: 486 – the crew comprised 29 persons). The losses caused by disease, as described by Diogo Gomes, were very great, larger even than in battle.

The Venetian Alvise da Ca da Mosto also wrote about diseases as a cause of death on these voyages (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 96; Crone 1937: 66). In his account of the second journey of 1456, in the part concerning sailing up the Gambia, he writes of the death of one of the sailors, 'who had been prostrated many days by fever.' This death affected the crew greatly. The sailor was buried on an

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island in the river, and as his name was Andrea, the island was named St. Andrew's (Isola di Sancto Andrea). Ca da Mosto wrote about fevers, high temperatures, and diarrhea caused by the heat and unaccustomed food. During the voyage on the Gambia, 11 days after sailing from the mouth of the river, many sailors suffered from these ailments (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 101–102).

It is hard to believe that the crews of the expeditions described earlier by Zurara did not struggle with the same health concerns and ensuing deaths. Perhaps the plundering raids were shorter than the trading expeditions, but the number of days spent in the Gambia, given by Gomes and Ca da Mosto, was also not great. It is more likely that, for Zurara, death in battle was laudable and noteworthy, while death as a result of sickness was not glorious, so he didn't write about it.

Ca da Mosto, like Gomes, noted deaths in battle, although as a merchant he tried to avoid armed conflict. Faced with aggression his strategy was to run away, and he defended himself only in case of necessity. During the first voyage, in 1455, he also reached the river Sine-Saloum and the area settled by the Niominka-Serer, who had killed Nuno Tristão and Valarte. The Serer had consistently refused proposals to trade. Ca da Mosto's expedition met a similar response and sailed away as fast as it could (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 77–78).

The caravels headed south and reached the Gambia. A scouting party was sent out in a boat, with the order to flee in the face of danger. The caravel was approached by a boat carrying 20–30 Africans, who restricted themselves to observing the arrivals. The next day, the three caravels set off up the river and were surrounded by 15 large boats with around 130–150 armed men, who began to shoot arrows at them. The ships responded by firing from four cannons, but no harm was done to the attackers. The crossbow, however, was a mortal weapon. One of the Africans, shot in the chest, fell dead, but the fervor of the attackers was not damped. Since the crossbows were inflicting further losses, all the African boats attacked the smallest caravel, trying to separate it from the others. These others, however, came to its aid and repulsed the Africans. Ca da Mosto does not mention the death of any of the Europeans. When the battle subsided, the interpreters began to shout to the Africans, explaining the peaceful intentions of the Portuguese. One of the canoes approached the caravels. The Africans indicated that they knew about the newcomers and about their trade on the Senegal. They knew that they bought slaves, who then disappeared. They believed that the newcomers were cannibals and wanted to kill them all (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 83–85). Given the situation, the caravels sailed back to Portugal.

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Thus Africans also died in battle at the hands of European merchants who did not want to fight but were forced to do so. This was the result of the horrible but justified news about the Europeans, given the aggression of their earlier expeditions – that was circulating among the Africans.

In Diogo Gomes's reminiscences, in addition to the descriptions of the above instances of death in battle or as a result of illness, he relates an event which did not end in death, but in which death was very close. Gomes saw huge waves strike the caravel so hard that the anchor was torn away. The crew members were deeply worried, but fortunately the caravel did not go down and no one drowned.

A narrative that ended with the sinking of a ship was left by the merchant from Bruges, Eustache Delafosse, who sailed to West Africa in 1480. A ship that had sailed earlier than Delafosse's vessel was carrying a man named Henry, the factor of Thomas Perrot, another merchant from Bruges. Beyond Cabo Blanco, this ship sailed into a maelstrom (*gouffre*) and sank. The crew made it to land in a *chaloupe* and headed toward the Rio de Oro, but there they perished in a battle with the Moors. Delafosse's ship managed to avoid the maelstrom. It is puzzling that in other sources there are no descriptions of maritime catastrophes, the sinking of caravels and associated deaths (Delafosse-Escudier: 20).

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The source materials quoted above are certainly not exhaustive, and are in varying degrees one-sided. It is hard to determine what killed most Europeans on these expeditions. It can be supposed that in the earliest period, the time of plundering raids, death occurred most often in battle. When the intensity of fighting diminished and then stopped, other causes of death increased and predominated. Among the Europeans, these were ailments produced by the difficult climate and different food. The Africans, too, died primarily in battle in the early period. If they were taken into captivity, they also died on account of disease or ailments and the difference in food and climate in Portugal. Another cause of death was the poor psychological state of the abductees, their feelings of despair and their longing for their families. As to the deaths of slaves on the caravels that returned to Portugal, whose feelings were undoubtedly at their lowest ebb, we have only isolated pieces of information (Zurara-Soares: 503–504; Russell 2009: 315–328). Alastair C. de C.M. Saunders found that mortality among slaves on ships that sailed from Arguim to Lisbon from 1501 to 1509 amounted to from one to four per cent; it was considerably higher on

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ships sailing from more distant Sierra Leone or Mina (Saunders 1982:14). Judging by the stress and terrible conditions of such journeys, among them the crowding of the prisoners, deaths must have been frequent, but they were not interesting to the authors of the sources and, from their viewpoint, not worth noting.

The recounting by the narrators of the death of a human being depended on many factors. Above all, the deaths of their own elicited a much stronger response than the deaths of opponents. Secondly, the death of a famous person was treated differently than the death of a person who had no social position, fortune, or prestige.

The deaths of famous knights, commanders of expeditions, or ship captains, such as Gonçalo de Sintra, Nuno Tristão, and Valarte, were extensively described. These were individuals, specific, worthy people. This view of the individual in death corresponds to the change in attitude toward death that occurred in the late Middle Ages in Europe (in addition to the works mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, see also Braet, Verbeke 1983; Alexandre-Bidon 1998; Lauwers 1999: 771–787). But this individualism concerned prominent individuals only; other people died anonymously and collectively. The response to their death was very traditional.

Zurara tried to elevate and ritualize the death of outstanding people. He offered prayers for them and expressed the certainty that they would achieve eternal life in heaven. He increased the circle of people he mentioned by name to knights and squires. As chronicler of the expeditions he was very sensitive to how these men's deeds were commemorated. The lack of graves and tombs for these heroes was a painful problem for him. Some of the dead, due to the circumstances, had been abandoned on the field of battle and their bodies could not be recovered. Other bodies could not be transported to Portugal and were thrown into the sea. Zurara consoled himself and his readers then with the idea of the eternal souls of the fallen. In this situation, the most important form of commemoration became Zurara's chronicle itself. On the basis of his work, the heroes' deeds and deaths could be remembered by authors of later, 16th-century works: Valentim Fernandes, Duarte Pacheco Pereira and, above all, João de Barros (Fernandes 1938: 48,126; Pacheco-Mauny: 32–34, 36, 74; Barros-Cidade: 38–39, 59–60).

Although also individualized, the commemoration of the sailor Andrea, who had died in 1456 during the expedition of the Venetian, Ca da Mosto, was different. He was buried on an island that was subsequently named after his patron saint. Ca da Mosto was less traditional than Zurara or Diogo Gomes, as is shown in his decision about the burial of the sailor, who was not a prominent

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person. Gomes, whose views were closer to those of Zurara, does not give the names of sailors who died of fever; he gives only their number, treating their deaths collectively. On the other hand, he mentions the name of the captain, who was extremely ill but still alive. Eustache Delafosse mentions only the factor Henry among the crew of the caravel that was lost, although this was not necessarily because he chose to treat the crew differently; doubtless Delafosse, as a foreigner, did not know anyone but the said Henry by name.

In the first phase of the European expeditions to Africa, death was usually violent and sudden. There was no time for the dying to prepare for it, no time for contemplation or for the usual gestures of custom and culture. The dying were not surrounded by the living, saying farewell and holding up hopes of a better world. The late medieval *ars moriendi* could not be followed, either by the dying or by their companions (Tenenti 1952; Włodarski 1987, 1991). Only certain aspects of it were reported, in the deaths that occurred as a result of illness and in the farewell to the sailor André. The extended description of the circumstances of death, the valediction to the fallen and prayer for their souls in Zurara's chronicle, thus filled the role – besides having other significance – of at least partially restoring the expected words and gestures of the late medieval cultural practices around dying.

The chronicler and other authors of accounts expressed numerous feelings relating to the deaths of their own people. Sadness reigned above all (Zurara-Soares: 267, 490; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 96), and was often accompanied by tears (Zurara-Soares: 285, 483), the desire to commemorate the fallen dead, admiration for their heroism (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 78), fear, anger, the desire for vengeance (Zurara-Soares: 269, 287–288), and finally the elevation of death through prayer. In one instance, Zurara expresses more violent feelings – rage and hatred toward those who had killed Nuno Tristão. In another, he went so far as to accuse the 'Moors' of cannibalism (Zurara-Soares: 267, 269, 287–288).

Death also entailed legal consequences. We are primarily aware of privileges that were granted by Portuguese rulers to the widows and children of men who had served in Africa. There are no traces of compensation for the losses of poor people. The first instance of a privilege being granted – compensation for the widow of the knight Pedro Anes Encerrabodes, who died in 'Guinea' in the service of the king – was noted in the Portugaliae Monumenta Africana, and is dated 12 December 1453. Afonso V awarded a pension (*teença*) to the widow (PMA: vol. 1, no. 10 from 12 December 1453). In total, from 1453 to 1500, six privileges were inserted in this collection of documents. The king thereby granted either a yearly monetary pension or rights to part of the revenues collected

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earlier by the deceased from rural estates and royal towns (PMA: vol. 1, no. 39 from 17 July 1462, no. 152 from 10 July 1484, no. 190 from 23 March 1487; vol. 2, no. 20 from 5 May 1490, no. 47 from 22 April 1492).

The pride felt by those who had participated in African expeditions was reinforced by papal bulls. Zurara described the embassy that the Infante Dom Henrique sent to Rome in 1442 to obtain indulgence for explorers who had died in Africa, and quoted the text of the bull of Pope Eugene IV from 19 December 1442, which granted indulgence, among other things (Zurara-Soares: 99–101). Charles-Martial de Witte (1954: 441–445) writes that he was unable to find this bull in the Vatican Archives, although it was published by Levi Maria Jordão (1869–1873: vol. 1, 21). Although Eugene IV had been dethroned by the Basel Council by the date of the bull, he continued to fill his functions. Sixtus IV's brief of 11 September 1481 granted complete pardon to all who would die in future 'in Mina Castle in Ethiopia' (PMA: vol. 1, no. 286). Obtaining this brief was an important part of the preparations for the expedition, the aim of which was to build a castle in Mina – which took place in 1482.

The death of Africans was different, as viewed by the Portuguese. Above all, it was the death of 'a stranger,' an 'other.' In the first phase of the expeditions, it was the Portuguese who brought death, and such killing was regarded as a service and an honor. From their perspective the Africans who died were anonymous and their deaths were collective. The lack of information about their opponents further strengthened the sense of their strangeness and otherness. In the descriptions, the number of Africans captured is given, followed by the number of those killed. Often the number is replaced by the statement that 'many were killed.'

Killing was not the goal of the Portuguese, but rather a means to break the resistance of the Africans. The aim was originally to capture slaves, that is, live people. But on account of the chivalric nature of Zurara's chronicle, a certain individualization of the deaths of Africans occurs in it. This concerned those who fought bravely for their family, clan, or village, who defended their people and bought with their own deaths time for the others to flee. In Zurara there are descriptions of individual combat with such brave Africans – both Azeneg and black Africans – whose heroism was implicitly honored by the fact that killing such an opponent raised the standing of the Portuguese knight. In battle with Africans who fought in an organized fashion, the Portuguese sought out those who were better armed, whose bearing was remarkable, who appeared to enjoy authority. They attempted to attack and kill these warriors first – both as a battle tactic and in acknowledgement of the worth of such an opponent.

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Merchants behaved differently. Ca da Mosto noted:

> [...] we had come thither to trade in the country peacefully and with their approval, which would be achieved through reason, and not by arms or force (Crone 1937: 57).
>
> Perché nui eramo lì conduti per voler tratar con el paexe bona paxe e concordia e tor da lor benivolentia, la qual se convegnia aquistar con inzegno e non per arme né per forza (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 80).

Therefore he tried to avoid fighting, and to flee from attacks. He fought only when flight was impossible. In an armed conflict on the Gambia, even in the heat of the battle, the Venetian observed the behavior of the Africans, including their reaction to the death of one of their own, which he later noted down.

Another merchant, Eustache Delafosse, travelled 25 years later, when relations with the Africans had been regulated. Although he observed instances of plundering, which were still occurring, he himself made no such raids nor did he have any intention of killing anyone (Delafosse-Escudier: 34). The merchants' goals were different than the knights' goals, but mostly their methods of operating in Africa were entirely divergent.

We can imagine the attitudes of Africans from their actions and we can recreate them from what European authors have written. We know of two typical reactions to an unexpected raid: flight or fight. The Azeneg primarily tried to flee from their assailants. Often the men faced the attacks to give the women and children time to escape. This was a spontaneous reaction, unorganized, the result of an instantaneous decision. In defending themselves, the men of course tried to kill the attackers, but their chances were limited. The difference in arms and organization gave the Portuguese an enormous advantage. From the events on the island of Tider, the conclusion can be drawn that after a certain time the Berbers decided on organized battle. They gathered a few hundred warriors, perhaps both Azeneg fishermen and nomads from the desert, and were victorious against succeeding Portuguese expeditions, killing a number of attackers. We do not know what the Berbers' losses were, although they must have been considerable, in spite of the victory. However, such a mobilization of all forces could last only a short period. The inhabitants of the coast still had to flee before danger and Zurara writes of the depopulation of certain areas (Zurara-Soares: 230, 241, 296, 322, 375–377).

In contrast to the peoples of the Saharan coast, who lived within the framework of family, clans and segmentary organizations, the sub-Saharan Africans

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that the Portuguese encountered (although not on all areas of the Guinea coast) were organized into chiefdoms with varying degrees of centralization and early state organizations. In many cases, black Africans reacted to the arrival of the Portuguese in a concerted manner. The aim was to kill, or at least to drive off, the newcomers. After a few years – or even less – of battle, peoples such as the Wolof, Mandingo or Akan, agreed to establish trading relations. Others, including primarily the Serer, rejected all offers of trade and meetings for a long time and fought with determination against the new arrivals.

The reason was the belief that the Portuguese were cannibals. They were not only foreign but monstrous and evil. The need to resist them was exacerbated by the density and extent of their settlements in comparison with those on the Saharan coast; escape to another area was not out of the question, but would have involved conflict with other peoples. This was the context of the Africans' courage and uncompromising attitude in battle, as noted by the authors of the accounts, and chiefly by Ca da Mosto.

On the reactions of Africans to the death of their people we have very meager information. Ca da Mosto, a penetrating observer of the people with whom he wished to trade, provides some detail. The African warrior was characterized, in the Venetian's opinion as feeling 'contempt for death' and having 'no fear of death' (Crone 1937: 34, 59), *non temer la morte* (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 48, 83). When one of them was killed by an arrow from a crossbow, the others were more interested in the unfamiliar missile than in their fallen comrade. This was a reaction to death during the course of battle, but a general knowledge of African culture allows us to suppose that in extended families and clans, the death of one or several of their members was very deeply felt. In these cultures, great weight is attached to the cult of ancestors and to the ties that bind the living to the dead. African peoples observe numerous ceremonies concerning death and burials. In the battles between Europeans and Africans in the 15th century, the bodies of fallen Africans remained on the field of battle. But after the retreat or departure of the Europeans, the body was recovered without difficulty for the performance of the appropriate burial rituals.

The situation in the event of the death of a captured African was entirely different. Such a death onboard ship on the way to Portugal, or later, once there, occurred in complete isolation from that person's society, and was thus particularly lonely and tragic.

We are unable to analyze the effect of Africans' deaths on the functioning of their societies. We can only make hypotheses based on deductions. It was not the deaths of young warriors but that of the women and children who did not manage to escape that was particularly destructive for small clan societies and village communities. In addition, the abduction of people into slavery was a social loss similar to death for a community, since they disappeared completely.

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This was the case for the Berber Azeneg and for those sub-Saharan peoples who lived in segmentary organizations, formed of independent villages. The loss of a dozen or even a few people was a catastrophe for such a small society. The sources confirm this in relation to the Azeneg, some of whose terrains were totally abandoned as a result.

The death of warriors in the armies of chiefdoms or states was not an exceptional circumstance, however. It was written into the operating methods of such organizations. Ca da Mosto writes about the numerous and bloody wars conducted by the Africans amongst themselves (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 47–48), and parts of Zurara's chronicle confirm the picture (Zurara-Soares: 536). For this reason, the deaths of warriors in the armies of chiefdoms and states was not destructive, but rather a natural event. In these African cultures, the social functions and responsibilities of a fallen warrior were taken over by his extended family.

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Among the causes of death of Europeans during the early expeditions to Africa there was one that ensued from relations between Europeans, and was related to European-African contact only indirectly. This was death as a punishment for people who broke the Portuguese law – the royal monopoly on trade with Africa. The monopoly resulted from the Portuguese being the first Europeans to reach Africa, and had been confirmed by papal bulls (PMA: vol. 1, no. 15, Nicolas V's bull of 8 January 1455; no. 16, Callistus III's bull of 26 February 1455; no. 20, Callistus III's bull of 13 March 1456; no. 129, Sixtus IV's bull of 21 June 1481). Foreigners such as Ca da Mosto or Valarte could legally go to Africa only in the service of Infante Dom Henrique, and, after his death, in the service of the Portuguese rulers. In addition to the general monopoly, the Portuguese crown also introduced a ban on trading in certain goods, for instance, weapons. Attempts were soon made to break the monopoly and bans, but such actions were punished by the confiscation of the goods and the death of the traders. Diogo Gomes tells of a certain merchant, named Prado, who had been trading in Africa illegally and was caught. He was taken to Portugal, where the king condemned him to a torturous death (Gomes 1959: 53, 55). According to John W. Blake, Prado was a Castilian merchant (Blake 1967: 203).

The royal document of Dom Afonso of 6 April 1480 ordered the Portuguese captains of caravels to capture anyone trading illegally in Africa, and to throw the goods and ship's crew into the sea (PMA: vol. 1, no. 115). Delafosse, a merchant from Bruges, was more fortunate. His ship was caught somewhat earlier, in January 1480, on the Mina Coast, along with two Portuguese caravels that were also trading illegally. He wasn't drowned, but his goods were confiscated,

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and, as a prisoner, he was ordered to continue trading – only on behalf of the royal treasury. Several of the more important people from the three captured caravels were treated similarly. The rest of the crew and the poor people were put in one of the captured caravels, given a little water and biscuit, one sail and an anchor, and sent to sea. Their chances of surviving were negligible, but according to Delafosse, they did manage to return. After a period of trading, Delafosse himself and several other merchants were transported to Portugal, tried, and condemned to be hanged (Delafosse-Escudier: 28, 52–54). Delafosse managed, however, to escape from prison.

Sometimes offenders who transgressed the royal monopoly or ban on trading in certain goods were granted clemency, as is proven by the document of João II of 31 July 1490. The king waived the death penalty for a certain Afonso Rodrigues, condemned earlier for trading in gold and slaves in Sierra Leone (PMA: vol. 2, no. 29).

Other documents that contain information about death in the context of Europeans' relations with Africans are the pardons for people who killed their own or someone else's slave (PMA: vol. 1, no. 80 from 17 December 1472; no. 186 from 24 January 1487; no. 210 from 10 June 1488; no. 211 from 10 June 1488). As it would appear from these documents, slaves in Portugal, as well as those who remained in Africa, were protected by law from murder – either by their owner or by a third party. Regardless of the degree of this protection and the pardons of those guilty of murder, there was a fundamental difference between considering the killing of an African to be natural, as in the time of the earliest expeditions, and granting even a minimal degree of protection to an African once captured. Probably such legal protection did not arise at the moment of a person's capture or purchase, but existed from the moment of his or her baptism.

Baptism removed the hostage from the collective of 'strangers' and 'others,' to whom no protection was extended, and brought him or her into the fold of society's 'own,' and the death of the baptized, even of the lowest social position, was treated differently.

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CHAPTER 3

How Did They Communicate?

The difficulty encountered by the Portuguese and the Africans on the West African coast in communicating with one another was one of many problems both sides had to overcome. When two or more cultures meet, each will attempt to gather information about the friend or foe that will establish some sort of communication or will lead to an exchange of useful knowledge. It was quite often the case that the relatively short stretches of African coast were populated by numerous, culturally diverse groups. The fact that the Europeans faced not one, unknown people and culture, but rather distinct groups, each having their own culture and language, led to some very specific problems with communication during the Portuguese expeditions to Africa in the 15th century. This made it vital for the arrivals to be flexible in their approach and try to make themselves understood over and over again.

During the initial expeditions, communication with Africans was considered to be a problem of a technical and organizational nature and, as such, it did not give rise to any contention. But some attention was nevertheless devoted to the question. With time, communication with Africans took on an economic nature, as evidenced in information contained in the descriptive sources and related documents.

The earliest information on communication between the Portuguese and Africans is obtained from chronicles and accounts that are relatively credible. More often than not, they depict the experiences of particular individuals and specific journeys, rather than describing a system or systems of communication that had been created by the explorers. We will compare these individual pieces of information with the creation of a system of communication thought out as early as in the days of Henry the Navigator.

European sources do not provide much evidence of attempts by the African peoples to gather information about the newcomers and to organize and formalize communication with them. There are also no 15th-century African sources that adequately convey the actions taken by the Africans in this matter. But since we have corroborated evidence that information about Europeans was transmitted between different peoples – like the Wolof and Serer, or Akan and Mandingo – we can assume that at least some of them made preparations for the arrival of the Europeans. Even though we must concentrate on communication methods used by the Europeans, given the lack of sources otherwise, we must remain fully aware that their point of view forms only a part of the story that is of interest to us.

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Sooner or later, every single member of a European expedition to Africa was faced with the problem of communicating with the local people. Depending on resourcefulness and education, each of them came up with an individually suited solution to the problem. Sign language and gesticulation was initially the preferred form of communication. It soon became evident that sign language was widely understood by people of completely different cultures who had just met for the very first time, but only when it came to simple matters. Consequently, interpreters began taking part in the earliest expeditions, and by the mid 15th century a specialized group of people was being trained to act as interpreters for explorers.

3.1 Interpreters

The first Portuguese expeditions to Africa were conquests by knights (Mota 1946: 13–68, 273–326, 457–511; Małowist 1963: 20–38; 1976a: 75–95). Yet, even when contact was limited to armed conflict, there was a need to communicate with the enslaved Africans – be it to tell them what to do, to determine their ransom, to convince the prisoners to be baptized in the Christian faith, or simply to obtain information. In order to do so, Europeans tried to use interpreters as often as was possible.

Interpreters had been used even earlier, during the *Reconquista* and in battles against Morocco. Due to Portugal's geographical location, being close to the world of Islam, there were people there who could speak Arabic. The Portuguese first employed some of them as interpreters on their expeditions to Africa. The problem of communication between the Portuguese and the Africans has been studied on the margins of linguistic research by David Dalby and Paul Hair (Dalby, Hair 1964, 1968; Hair 1966). Peter E. Russell wrote about interpreters (Russell 1995a, 1st edition – 1980), and Dejanirah Couto wrote about them in connection with other, larger areas of Portugal's 16th-century empire (Couto 2003). The chroniclers and authors called them *trusimão* or *trusiman*, from the Arabic word for interpreter: *tordjman* or *torgiuman*. In addition to Zurara, who is quoted below, this term was also used by Ca da Mosto and Valentim Fernandes, who was originally from Moravia (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 49–50, 77–78, 113; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 499–500, 516, 525; Fernandes 1951: 26, 116 and footnote 59). In contrast, Rui de Pina and João de Barros used the term *lingua* to refer to an interpreter (Pina 1950: 101; Barros-Cidade: 80, 82; see also Viterbo 1905: 496–497). There were, however, not very many of them and only some early expeditions had such interpreters in their ranks. Besides this, it soon became evident that the usefulness of Arab interpreters was limited, as

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the Portuguese sailed ever more southwards and came across the Berber people, very few of whom spoke Arabic.

Thanks to the chronicle of Gomes Eanes Zurara, we can follow the history of several interpreters and the way in which their work was used from the fourth decade of the 15th century. In 1441, a slave of Infante Henrique, known as Alarve (Arab), took part in the expedition of Nuno Tristão and Antão Gonçalves. The journey reached Rio do Oro, halfway between Cabo Bojador and Cabo Blanco, where it was hoped that Alarve could communicate with the local people. Zurara notes:

> If they could understand one another, it would be of great profit, to know all the state and conditions of the people of that land (Zurara-Beazley: 45).
>
> e que se se entendessem, que aproveitaria muito para saber todo o estado e condições das gentes daquela terra (Zurara-Soares: 90).

However, the language of the first few captured Africans was different and they could not understand Arabic

After several days, Nuno Tristão carried out a surprise attack on a camp of nomads with the help of a part of his crew. Some of the nomads were killed in battle, but 10 were taken captive. Among the prisoners was a certain Adahu. The Portuguese soon realized that Adahu was a man of noble birth. The Arab interpreter tried to talk with this new group of captives – once more without success. As Zurara put it: 'the language of the prisoners was not Moorish (that is Arab – MT), only Azengue' (*porque a linguagem daqueles não é mourisca mas azeneguia*) (Zurara-Beazley: 49; Zurara-Soares: 94). Gomes also wrote about Adahu:

> they seized thirty […] men and women […], among whom they captured an older and venerable man named Adahu.
>
> ceperunt tredecim homines et mulieres […] inter quos acceperunt quendam senem et reverendum virum nomine Adahu (Gomes 1959: 19; Sintra 2002: 56).

The Azeneg (Znaga) were Berbers and were either nomadic herdsmen or fishermen. Only Adahu could understand what the interpreter said to him and – with some trouble – could answer several very basic questions that were

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asked of him. The information he gave, however, was not enough to learn much about the local people and to form any lasting ties with them.

To establish such contacts, the Arab interpreter and one of the captured women were sent inland. Their task was to reach the woman's tribe and discuss the possibility of a ransom for the remaining prisoners. The interpreter was also to discuss the possibility of future trade that could take place between the Portuguese and the Africans. After two days, a group of 150 warriors on foot and 30 fighters mounted on horses and camels arrived from inland. They had no intention of trading or negotiating with the Portuguese (which, under the circumstances, was not at all surprising); they had come to set a trap for the visitors. The Europeans, however, were taking the utmost precautions. Besides this, they had been warned by the interpreter, who had been told of the plan by the Africans. Consequently, besides the poor interpreter being enslaved by the Africans, nothing came from this attempt to make meaningful contact with the local people (Zurara-Soares: 95–96).

The Portuguese returned to their country with their captives. It was hoped that Adahu, the 'nobleman' who was among the prisoners, could be later used as an interpreter. It was also hoped that his social rank would make it easier for him to carry out Portugal's tasks in Africa. Consequently, Adahu was well treated in Portugal and generously rewarded by the Infante Henrique. He slowly began to learn Portuguese. It was Adahu and several other captives that brought the first information from the depths of Western Africa to Infante Henrique and Europe.

> Although the language of those captives could not to be understood by any of the other Moors who were in this kingdom, either as freemen or captives, it sufficed, for a beginning, that the noble whom Antão Gonçalves had brought could recount for the understanding of the Infant a very great part of the matters of that land where the aforesaid noble dwelt (Zurara-Beazley: 52).

> Ainda que a linguagem daqueles presos não pudesse ser entendida por nenhuns outros mouros que em esta terra estivessem, ora fossem forros ou cativos, bastou, para começo, o aquele cavaleiro, que Antão Gonçalves trouxera, soube dizer. Pelo qual o Infante foi em conhecimento de mui grande parte das coisas daquela terra onde ele morava (Zurara-Soares: 99).

Diogo Gomes and Hieronimus Münzer also wrote about conducting interviews among the captives abducted in Africa (Gomes 1959: 19–21; Münzer 1854: 351; Russell 1995a: 11).

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Zurara wrote about Adahu, stating:

> As you know that naturally every prisoner desireth to be free, which desire is all the stronger in a man of higher reason or nobility whom fortune has condemned to live in subjection to another (Zurara-Beazley: 54).

> Como sabeis, naturalmente todo preso deseja ser livre, o qual desejo tanto é major quanto a razão ou nobreza mais abasta naquele que, por fortuna, se acertou de viver em sujeição alheia (Zurara-Soares: 103–104).

This is why, despite living in comfort, Adahu longed to regain his freedom. He constantly harried Antão Gonçalves to take him back to the land of his birth. He promised to replace himself with five or six African slaves. He also maintained that among the 10 slaves that had been brought from Africa, there were two who were prepared and willing to pay the ransom. Antão Gonçalves was hence counting on at least 10 new slaves in return for liberating three. The Infante Henrique was finally convinced to the exchange by the argument of baptizing heathen souls. After all, it was better to convert 10 people than only three.

The caravels departed in 1443 and soon reached the place where, two years earlier, the slaves had been captured. Adahu was to serve as an interpreter and to organize trade between the two sides. He disembarked from the Portuguese ship in a magnificent robe that had been gifted to him – and was never seen again. However, he must have notified his tribesmen of the Portuguese, because several days later a number of them appeared on the shore to buy back the remaining prisoners. The Portuguese communicated with the tribesmen thanks to the help of one of the crew members, Martin Fernandes, who could speak Arabic and was an *alfaqueque* – an official whose task it was to bargain for the freedom of Christians enslaved by Arabs. Zurara notes that the said Martin:

> had great knowledge of the Moorish tongue, for he was understood among these people, where the other Arab (Alarve), who was Moor by nation, could only find one person to understand him (Zurara-Beazley: 57).

> havia grande sabedoria da linguagem mourisca, pois entre aqueles era entendido onde o outro alarve (que era mouro, de nação) não pudera achar quem o entendesse senão um só (Zurara-Soares: 106).

Attempts to communicate made by an Arab interpreter were presumably seen by the Berbers as a form of compulsion or trickery and that may be why no one

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among them was particularly eager to talk. The nomads who had been sent by Adahu, however, had come especially to buy back their kinsmen. Adahu had informed them of the possibility of communicating with the Europeans in Arabic, and the Africans had sent emissaries who could speak that language. This incident demonstrates the degree to which such encounters depended on the intentions of the Africans. After having paid the ransom, both sides began to trade. Adahu, however, never came back, as Zurara complains:

> the Moorish noble never returned to fulfil his promise, neither did he remember the benefits he had received (Zurara-Beazley: 57).
>
> o mouro cavaleiro nunca tornou a satisfazer a sua menagem, nem tão pouco se lembrou do benefício (Zurara-Soares: 107).

Adahu was not the only slave who managed to escape. The Infante Henrique had entrusted Gonçalo de Sintra with a precious slave – an interpreter, a young boy who was a descendant of the Azeneg and could speak perfect Portuguese. In 1444, de Sintra set sail for Cabo Blanco and the island of Arguim with the boy on board. The prince had ordered that the boy was to be well treated and that he was to be kept under constant observation – to make sure that he would not escape. The Azeneg boy, however, managed to lull the suspicions of the crew, took advantage of the carelessness of his guards, and escaped back to his own people. From that moment on, the expedition and several following expeditions mentioned by Zurara, communicated with the Africans they encountered only by gestures and sign language (Zurara-Soares: 157–158, 212–213).

Clearly, the first attempts of the 1440s at communicating with the people of the West African desert coast using an interpreter were rather unsuccessful. Several factors attributed to this debacle. Firstly, there were only a very limited number of interpreters. Secondly, Arabic was known only by some, usually the more educated Berbers. Thirdly, some of the captured prisoners could have been pretending not to understand Arabic so as not to help the aggressors. When attempts were made to use Berber prisoners as interpreters, little guarantee could be given of their loyalty. In the early stages of Portuguese expansion, the Berber interpreters tried to escape at each given possibility, oblivious – as we have seen above – to the 'benefits' that had been shown to them. The escapes continued, because their material well-being could not replace their freedom, life among strangers was one of continuous suffering, and their desire to return to their own country and people was overwhelming and lasted for many years.

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The main reason behind the initial failure to establish contact and communicate with the Africans was the behavior of the first explorers. The Portuguese had begun their relationship with the Africans by ambushing them, taking prisoners, and killing the people who resisted. Only later did they attempt to communicate with the locals using prisoners they had captured earlier. They encountered resistance, unease, suspicion, enmity, a desire to rescue the hostages, and a yearning for revenge, all quite understandable feelings in the face of the European violence and pillage.

However, even during these first, tumultuous encounters, circumstances did arise when mutual curiosity was stronger than suspicion and the need to obtain information prevailed over mistrust and enmity, as we will see further in this book.

Interpreters also took part in several expeditions led by Antão Gonçalves and other explorers between 1444 and 1446. They were sent ashore, but could not convince the indigenous people to trade or to conduct any further talks. Only one elderly African man came aboard and asked to be taken to Portugal. His wish was granted. Henry the Navigator received the man well, bestowed him with gifts, and sent him back to Africa. Meanwhile, to vouchsafe for the aged African, a member of the crew named João Fernandes had remained ashore and made his way to the nomad's camp to collect information about them (Zurara-Soares: 169–170). The nameless Berber and Fernandes were also written about by Marian Małowist, José Gentil da Silva and by Peter Russell (Małowist 1969a: 131; Silva 1987: 189–190; Russell 2001: 203–206).

After his return, João Fernandes recounted his experiences, gave the names of several oases, brought descriptions and news from the desert, and informed the Portuguese of the trade routes taken by caravans and of the goods traded (Zurara-Soares: 189–192, 196, 445–450). He also called his superior's attention to the lack of state organization among the nomads. Zurara does not mention whether João Fernandes learned the local language or not, but if one bears in mind the length of his expedition (seven months), it is very possible.

Zurara tends to stress that voluntary exchanges were rather unique and exceptional. Yet, with time, both sides got to know each other better. This was especially true after 1447, when the Portuguese began to build a castle and set up a trading post on the island of Arguim. By the end of the 1440s, when Portuguese caravels were returning from the coast of black Africa and stopping in Arguim to trade, contact with the local Berbers had become routine (Zurara-Soares: 368, 498; Monod 1983; Małowist 1969a: 162, 165, 275–296). It had taken seven or eight years to overcome the initial enmity and to establish a working relationship with a partner in trade.

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Difficulties in communicating between Berbers and Europeans had not yet been overcome, when Portuguese caravels sailed past the desert coastlands of western Africa and further south, to the mouth of the Senegal River. Among them was Dinis Dias, who sailed past Cabo Verde in 1445. The regions between the mouth of the Senegal and Cabo Verde were densely populated. There the Portuguese came into contact with regions and states of the Wolof people (Zurara-Soares: 175–176, 535–536; Gomes 1959: 25; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 41–42; Mota 1946: 303 *et seq*.).

The first attempts to establish contact with the Wolof were unsuccessful (Zurara-Soares: 176–177). When Gomes Pires ordered some cake, a mirror and a piece of paper with a cross drawn on it to be left on shore in order to attract the attention of the locals, the latter destroyed all the offerings once the Portuguese had left (Zurara-Soares: 244, 255–258, 340–343, 365–366). Diogo Gomes recalled that:

> These people were entirely black, the Christians made signs that they came in peace, but they were not understood. When they were shown merchandise which the Christians had brought ashore they accepted it, but didn't want to talk.
>
> Et gens illa erat tota nigra et christiani faciebant signa pacis, et illi non intellexerunt. Miserunt christiani mercancias quas secum attulerant in terra, et illi ea receperunt nolentes loqui (Gomes 1959: 25; Sintra 2002: 62).

There was no chance of talks or trade.

The sailors of João Gonçalves Zarco's (Zargo) caravel were the next to reach the Senegal River. They communicated with the indigenous people with the help of sign language because they did not have an interpreter. The Europeans managed to convince the people in one of the canoes that was circling around the ship to board. The Africans were given some drink and shown around the caravel. Yet, after this initially peaceful encounter, when more canoes began to swim up to and around the caravel, another battle broke out (Zurara-Soares: 433–437).

It was very difficult to break out of the vicious circle of mistrust after the initial scuffles and fights. A witness of this was Valarte, the Danish knight who set out for Africa in 1447 with the permission of Henry the Navigator. This voyage had two interpreters – two Wolof prisoners who had been captured in earlier expeditions and educated in Portugal. Valarte probably made it all the way to the Saloum River and to the Serer (of the Niominka group) who lived there (and who were the southern neighbors of the Wolof). The fluency of the interpreters was sufficient to begin talks. (I will return to Valarte later.)

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The first stage of the journey proved to be a success. Although the Serer refused to exchange hostages as a way of guaranteeing peace, the two sides nonetheless began to trade. Guitenyia, the local chief, sent one of his people on board the caravel. The conversation took place through interpreters, who translated the Infante's letter to the messenger. The envoy made it clear that the Serer ruler, known by the term *boor*, was temporarily occupied on a military campaign and that it was difficult to contact him.

In the meantime, Guitenyia himself boarded the caravel, took part in feasts and began to trade with the Europeans. On one occasion he set off inland in search of ivory that the Portuguese wanted to buy. The Serer camp was temporarily dominated by people who were against continuing contacts with the Portuguese. Valarte, unaware of the situation, chose this moment to take the risk and go ashore in a small rowboat, accompanied by some members of his crew. One of the interpreters known as Afonso (his name indicates that besides being taught Portuguese in Europe, he had also been baptized there) jumped out of the boat and made his way toward the locals. This was probably yet another example of an escape by an interpreter. It was probably this gesture that constituted the final impulse that led the locals to attack. Valarte and his people were killed (Zurara-Soares: 533–543; Gomes 1959: 31).

The process of making contact with the Serer followed an already familiar pattern of attacks, kidnappings, teaching prisoners to serve as interpreters, the escape of interpreters, and finally the first talks with the Africans, with all the risks these meetings involved.

The Portuguese relations with the Wolof were much better than with the Serer. As was the case with the Berbers, the evolution of the relationship, from fighting to the establishment of permanent peaceful contact, took about seven to eight years. The situation had become entirely settled by 1454, when Ca da Mosto lived with the Wolof.

Every caravel that took part in Ca da Mosto's expedition was, first and foremost, provided with an interpreter. Thanks to them, the Portuguese could easily communicate with the Wolof. By that time, the level of trust had grown to such an extent that each side could visit the other without any misgivings and, even more importantly, without any exchange of hostages. Ca da Mosto even gave goods in advance to the ruler of the Wolof state of Cayor, named Budomel (about whom he already had considerable information from the Portuguese), and later travelled deep inland to Budomel's residence to collect the expected payment. With the help of interpreters, the two men held long conversations (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 56–59; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 499–500). Relations were so good that interpreters could be sent inland alone, without their owners having to worry about their possible escape (Gomes 1959: 25, 37, 39). Even if an interpreter did manage to escape, most probably he would only have been

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captured by the Africans and returned to his Portuguese owner: The Wolof were just as determined as the Portuguese to ensure smooth and efficient trade.

According to Ca da Mosto, the system of training, making use of and rewarding interpreters became fully developed during his travels. By that time, there were already enough interpreters for each ship to have one. However, it is important to remember that Ca da Mosto's expedition was particularly well equipped, since Henry the Navigator was especially eager to make use of the Venetian merchant's excellent business instincts. It is possible that other expeditions did not have as many well-trained interpreters.

The interpreters used on such occasions were mainly slaves who had been kidnapped or bought from the Wolof, christened and then trained in Portugal. The owners of these slaves hired them out to particular expeditions, in return for one slave for the services of each interpreter. It was also accepted practice that, if an interpreter managed to obtain four slaves for his master, he would regain his freedom. According to Ca da Mosto this happened quite often (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 78; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 516). Hieronimus Münzer wrote toward the end of the 15th century about the training of interpreters and informers recruited on the king's orders from among slaves abducted in Africa (*Informatus igitur Rex hos nigros fecit discere linguam Portugaliae*, Münzer 1854: 351). This is also borne out by a description from the early 16th century by Valentim Fernandes (1951: 26). The system by which interpreters would be trained and hired out, as described by Ca da Mosto, is corroborated by Portuguese and Castilian documents.

In 1475 a contract was concluded in Seville between Sancho de Muñón, the owner of a slave named Pedro Muça, on the one hand, and, on the other, Rodrigo Alvares, who intended to set off for Guinea, and two of his partners, who lived in Seville. Pedro Muça was to serve as interpreter and for this service his owner was to receive as payment a male or female slave to be chosen from the slaves that the expedition would bring back. This basic condition in the contract was accompanied by many additional points and reservations: if the expedition didn't bring back any slaves, Alvares would pay de Muñón 12,000 maravedi, i.e., the value of the slave; should the interpreter die, perish or flee during the expedition, Alvares would pay 15,000 maravedi; should the caravel fail to return or return later than in 18 months, the payments would be doubled and paid by Alvares's two partners; should the delayed caravel happily return, the supplementary payment would be returned. Moreover, the interpreter Pedro Muça was supposed to receive 50 maravedi for the purchase of clothes (PMA: vol. 1, no. 95 from 10 October 1475). Contracts anticipating all possible outcomes and vicissitudes, their detailed nature, and their inscription into the

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notarial protocols of the city, indicate considerable proficiency in drawing up such documents. An additional circumstance worthy of note is that in 1475 when the contract was concluded, Portugal and Castile were at war, and Castilian merchants and sailors did not respect the Portuguese monopoly on trade with Africa for this reason.

From August 18, 1477 we have a document in which Dom João, the future king of Portugal, frees a slave named João Garrido, who had belonged to a merchant named Gonçalo Toscano, living in Lagos. The said slave had brought his master numerous benefits when, as an interpreter, he took part in many expeditions to Guinea, from which he had originated (PMA: vol. 1, no. 101).

Interpreters were thus very valuable slaves and it is quite understandable that they were treated very well and their owners tried to keep them from any possible danger. But in the land of the Wolof there was no danger or risk anyway. Ca da Mosto's fleet later set its course southward to the regions of the mouth of the Saloum River, inhabited by the above-mentioned Niominka-Serer people. It was decided to send one of the interpreters inland, to scout out the territory. Because of the huge cost of such a slave, none of the captains of the caravels wanted to risk sending their own. To resolve the situation, lots were drawn and the interpreter chosen in this way was sent inland. His task was to find out as much as he could about the lands around the mouth of the Saloum, about the peoples of the region, about any possible local rulers and about trading gold or any other goods.

> Accordingly, when he [the interpreter] had landed, and the boat had withdrawn a short distance, he suddenly encountered a great number of negroes, who, having observed the ships approaching, had lain in wait with bows and arrows and other weapons to accost any of our men who might land. They conversed for a short while […] but they began furiously to strike at him with their short Moorish swords, and quickly put him to death, those in the boat being unable to succor him (Crone 1937: 56).

> Onde, essendo dismontato in terra, e tratasse la barcha um pocho a largo, subito vente al predito truciman molti Negri del paexe, i quali haveano visto i navalli, ierano reduti a la marina con archi e sagite e arme, e stavano cossì inboscadi per azoner algun de nui in terra. E vegundi a lui, li parlano per um pocho de spacio; […] salvo che con furia comenziano a ferir questo truciman nostro negro con algune spade moresche curte e brevemente lo amazareno, che quelli de la barcha non lo potè sochorer (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 78; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 516).

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The terrified merchants left as quickly as they could, sailing even further south, and eventually reaching the mouth of the River Gambia. The first contact with locals (presumably the same Niominka) was also unsuccessful but no blood was shed. The locals could understand the interpreters shouting to them from the caravel and communicating the Europeans' desire for peaceful trade. In response, the Africans, whose canoes were already surrounding the ships, shouted back and told the interpreters that they had heard news of the Europeans from the lands surrounding the Senegal, and that they had no intention of making any contact with them (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 85; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 520–521).

During the second mission in 1456 led by Ca da Mosto and Antoniotto Usodimare, and under the patronage of Henry the Navigator, the expedition once more reached the mouth of the River Gambia, but this time they decided to sail upriver. The Africans whom the Portuguese met there did not understand the interpreters, but when they were shown cloth and other trade goods from onboard the caravel, they understood the intent of the merchants, and were encouraged by the apparently peaceful actions of the white men. The Africans rowed their canoes closer to the caravels. It was quickly established that one of the natives could understand what the interpreters were saying and even dared to climb aboard one of the ships. The Europeans gave the man some trinkets to gain his trust. The conversation revealed that the rulers of the land were called Farisangoli (or Farisangul) and Batimansa. Today, we know that *faran* and *mansa* were the titles given to the chief and ruler in the Mande language (Monteil 1929; Konare 1981).

The Europeans decided to make contact with Batimansa. In order to establish relations with the chief, they sent one of their interpreters, along with the brave African man who had come aboard the caravel. Consequently, the Europeans and Africans traded for 11 days, and the amount of inquisitive locals who came aboard the caravels soon began to tire the crew. It is quite apparent that curiosity drew the Africans to the Europeans as much as the desire to trade. The crew communicated in several different ways with the visitors. However, gestures and sign language probably played the largest role, for as Ca da Mosto notes, 'In this way we had each day fresh people of various tongues down at the ships' (Crone 1937: 69), *E a questomodo havevemo ogni di zente nova a le caravelle, e de diversi lenguazi* (Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 525, 527–528; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 97–101, 110).

The caravels then once again set sail southwards and reached the mouth of the Casamansa River. The interpreters sent ashore returned with the name of the river and with news that the local ruler was in the process of waging a war. No trade occurred and only short conversations were held. After reaching the

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mouths of the Cacheu, Mansoa, and Geba rivers (located in present-day Guinea-Bissau), Ca da Mosto wrote:

> Then I, wishing to gain information of this people, caused my interpreters to speak with them, but none of them could understand what was said, [...] on realizing this, I was greatly disappointed [...] Reflecting that we were come to a new country of which we could not learn anything, we decided that to continue farther would be useless, for we judged that we should be continually encountering new languages [...] we accordingly decided to turn back (Crone 1937: 76).

> Unde io, desideroso de intender questa generation, li fixi parlar a li mei trucimani, di quali mai algun di lor potè intender cossa che li disseseno [...] vedendo questo, ne hebi grandissimo despiaser[...] Diché, vedando nui questo, che ieremo in paexe nuovo e che non podevemo esser intessi, concludessemo che 'l passar più avanti era superfluo, perché zudigavemo di atrovar sempre più novi lenguazi, [...] e cossì determinassemo de tornar indredo (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 113; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 534).

Ca da Mosto had come against the biggest problem the Europeans had with communicating with the West Africans – the large number of different groups and languages. The Venetians and other explorers soon learned from experience that, in practice, it was necessary to choose trade partners with the greatest potential – be it from the quality, quantity and diversity of tradeable goods they offered or arising from an adequately developed political system that would facilitate trade and help in maintaining constructive political contact.

Pedro de Sintra faced exactly the same problem when he sailed along the coasts of modern-day Sierra Leone and Liberia, in 1460. Nobody could understand his interpreters. However, curiosity overwhelmed fear and three Africans boarded the ship in the vicinity of the River Moa (located in modern Liberia). It is always quite astonishing to note just how many of these brave people there were, risking their life and their freedom to satisfy their burning curiosity. Two out of the three Africans were later allowed to disembark, while one was kept on board and taken back to Portugal. By acting in this way, the sailors were obeying the orders of their king, who had had declared that:

> This they did in obedience to His Majesty the King, who had enjoined them, that from the farthest land they reached, if it chanced that the people were unable to understand their interpreters, they were to contrive to bring away a negro, by force or persuasion, so that he might be interrogated

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> through the many negro interpreters, […] or in the course of time might learn to speak […] (Crone 1937: 84).

> E questo per adimpir el comandamento del suo signor re, el qual li comisse che de lutana terra dove i capitasseno non vogiando lor andar più avanti, se per aventura non fosseno intessi da quelle generation, che se inzegnasseno de menarli algun de quelli Negri del paexe, o per amor o per forza, per poder intender de lui con tempo, o per via de trucimania […], o per spatio de tempo che lo imparasse a parlar (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 125; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 541).

We deduce that the same method was used that had proved itself with the Berbers and Wolof (and most probably with the Mandingo people), which relied on creating the first few interpreters from among the captured prisoners.

Initially, no one in Portugal could understand the kidnapped African. Eventually, an African slave woman who belonged to one of Lisbon's townsmen and also came from a far-off land was able to communicate with the prisoner. She could not understand the man's language, or he hers, but they could speak in a third that both seemed to know. This example shows us how much effort the Portuguese put into communicating with the Africans. The prisoner was then richly rewarded by the king and sent back to Africa (Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 542; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 126). However, this particular effort turned out to be fruitless, as journeys to Africa ceased shortly afterward for some time, following the death of Infante Dom Henrique.

In reading the sources, it is clear that even during the first journeys of discovery, the Portuguese had developed a system of educating interpreters. As a result of their efforts, a particular group of people in Portugal was created, whose task was to serve as interpreters and to take part in expeditions to Africa. This group was mostly made up of captured slaves, who had been christened and educated in Portugal. After initially trying to escape, this group of imprisoned interpreters become more accepting of their fate and therefore more numerous in the decades following the 1450s. Besides that, once back in Africa there was nowhere to run. The African chiefs and rulers preferred to return escaped interpreters rather then risk losing a source of profitable trade. A system was also set in place to reward the owners of interpreters. Some interpreters managed to buy themselves out of slavery, and from that moment on became free people. It can be said that it took about seven to eight years in each of the discovered regions to transform an initially hostile situation, characterized by aggression, fighting and kidnapping, into one in which political and trade contacts were systematically upheld.

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Trade was not the sole area of activity in which interpreters were needed. In Portugal they also served in the interrogation of prisoners. Some interpreters assisted in diplomatic contacts, either in Africa or in Portugal, when embassies were received at the court in Lisbon. I will speak about those forms of the interpreters' work later on in the book.

3.2 The First Dictionary

In 1471, the Portuguese reached the shores of modern-day Ghana, which they called some years later the Gold Coast. In 1482, Diogo de Azambuja's expedition constructed a trading post and a castle there. Azambuja naturally made use of an interpreter in the long and complicated negotiations with the local ruler, Caramansa, aiming to obtain his approval for the construction (Pina 1950: 100–101; Pina-MMA 1952: 8–14; Barros-Cidade: 80, 82). The presence of interpreters is quite unsurprising. Eleven years had passed since the Portuguese first arrived on the Gold Coast and so there had been enough time to train people for the job. The course of these negotiations is discussed at length by Hair (Hair 1994a), and further in this book.

Understandably, interpreters were used during the most important discussions of a political nature and when large-scale trade transactions were conducted. But they could not have taken part in the thousands of less important talks, small-scale transactions, or individual efforts of merchants, sailors and soldiers acting on their own. There was always a shortage of interpreters for such tasks. More often than not, Europeans in Africa had to rely only on themselves and their abilities, and needed to know at least some words in the local language or languages.

The earliest accounts of travels present the first African words that were understood. Such words are, above all, the names of rulers, their titles (often mistaken for names, incidentally), the names of countries, regions, rivers, and settlements. A linguistic analysis of African terms and names found in European chronicles and accounts was conducted by Hair (1966a: 5–26). Avelino Teixeira da Mota in turn dealt with Portuguese toponyms in his own work (Mota 1950), and jointly with Armand Cortesão as the publisher of *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica* (PMC 1960–1963).

The first short collection of African words amounting to a dictionary was included in Eustache Delafosse's description of his African journey, which took place between 1479 and 1480. This text exists in several editions up to the end of the 19th century (Delafosse 1897: 174–201; 1949: 181–195). We are using the most recent (Delafosse-Escudier). Although this traveler came from Tournai,

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he worked in Bruges as a broker of a respected trading house. His well-prepared journey was one of many attempts by traders from Flanders to disrupt the monopoly that Portugal had established over trade with Africa. The decisive moment occurred in 1475, when war erupted between Portugal and Castile over a successor to the Castilian throne. The Portuguese, who were absorbed with the war, could not effectively prevent other Europeans from travelling to Africa. Castilian and Flemish ships therefore set sail for Africa, breaking the Portuguese trade monopoly (Delafosse-Escudier: 85–86, 112; Pacheco-Mauny: 109).

Delafosse left Bruges in May 1479 and made his way to Castile. However, when he reached Cadiz in November 1479 it was too late to undertake the dangerous voyage to Africa. A peace treaty ending the Portuguese-Castilian conflict had been signed on 4 September 1479 in Alcaçovas. One of its clauses recognized the Portuguese monopoly over the African trade. More importantly, with the end of the war, Portuguese vessels could now chase after ships that were attempting to violate this monopoly (Delafosse-Escudier: 109–111; Małowist 1969a: 179–180, 185; Serrão, 1479 and 1480). Despite this danger, Eustache Delafosse set sail for Africa in November 1479 and by the end of the month was already trading on the Pepper Coast. In December of that year, he reached the Gold Coast and the place where, soon afterwards, the Portuguese constructed their castle and trading post – São Jorge da Mina. There was already a small settlement there in 1479, which the Portuguese called Aldeia das Duas Partes, or Village of Two Parts. It had already become a centre of trade and commerce on that stretch of the coast. During the night from 5 to 6 January 1480, Delafosse and his crew were captured by the Portuguese, who were led by Diogo Cão (Delafosse-Escudier: 16, 22–26, 28–30).

The Portuguese took Delafosse's ship and his goods but ordered him to continue trading, this time in the name and to the benefit of the Portuguese. The caravels left Africa by the end of March and returned to Lisbon in May. Eustache Delafosse and some of his companions were put before a judge and sentenced to death. Delafosse managed to escape from prison and returned to Bruges in February 1481 (Delafosse-Escudier: 52–62).

Only a copy of his report describing his journey to Africa has survived to this day. It forms part of a handwritten collection of three travel accounts which were compiled for the merchant, Louis de la Fontaine from Valenciennes, in 1548. The work is now located in the municipal library in Valenciennes with the call number 493. It is difficult to establish when the original text, written in Old French, was penned. Based on the information in the text itself, the date is bound to be after 1492 and even after 1515. The publishers of the manuscript are quite certain that the precision and the amount of detail in the description

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indicate that the author used notes that were made during or immediately after the voyage itself. We can safely assume that on Delafosse's return to Bruges, a detailed investigation was held to determine the circumstances in which he had lost his ship and his merchandise. The notes could therefore have been created in connection with this investigation, but they could also have been written to inform Delafosse's patron of trade conditions in Africa (Delafosse-Escudier: 86–98; Russell 1976: 209–221). This would mean that we can treat the text as a believable source, since the author had no reason to lie, especially in the part of the text that contains the small dictionary.

This little dictionary contains a dozen or so African words used on the Gold Coast. The author probably considered these words to be the most essential for a merchant. The dictionary has mostly been studied by linguists. René Basset commented in 1911 that there was a lack of phonetic precision in the written words (Basset 1911: 417–422). L.E. Brosnahan drew attention to its importance (Brosnahn 1965: 5). Paul E.H. Hair and David Dalby determined that several of the words written down by Delafosse were in the Akan language and several others in Mande. Despite some inaccuracy in the written words and the natural evolution of the languages between the 15th and the 20th centuries, it is possible to determine the meaning of these words and to ascertain whether the translations attributed by Delafosse were indeed correct (Hair 1966b; Dalby, Hair 1968).

I accept and respect the research of the linguists, as I have neither the qualifications nor any reason to try and correct or judge them. The reason I have examined the dictionary is that its contents reveal to us the line of thought of the European explorers and the way in which they communicated with the Africans.

Of the words noted down by Delafosse, two especially have, until recently, evoked much discussion among historians: *manse* (as well as *caramanse*) and *berenbues*. *Mansa* (a word that was changed by Delafosse to *manse*), is a word in the Mande language that means 'ruler.' According to Delafosse, *caramanse* is a viceroy or a local ruler. Europeans came across this word even earlier in their contacts with the Mande people or with other peoples subordinated by the Mali state. We recall the title Batimansa and the name Casamansa that appear in Ca da Mosto's descriptions. *Mansa* is a word that occurred everywhere where the Mande people – even intermixed with others – formed political units, called *kafu* (chiefdoms), or where they organized themselves into any state structures (Monteil 1929; Cissoko 1969; Konare 1981; Tymowski 2009: 130–132).

The word *mansa* in reference to the Gold Coast was noted not only by Delafosse but also by Rui de Pina and João de Barros in a famous description of a

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discussion held between Diogo de Azambuja with the local ruler, Caramansa. They also mentioned the name of this chief (Pina-MMA 1952: 8–14; Barros-Cidade: 80–81). This could prove that the Mande had reached the Gold Coast and had influence on the political organization there. Similarly, the name given to merchants, *berenbues*, is associated by linguists with the Mande language. The fact that at the news of the arrival of the Europeans, merchants came to the coast from deep inland within six or seven days, has led some researchers to assume that they were Mande (Delafosse-Escudier: 26; Hair 1994: 56). Numerous scholars wrote about the role of Dioula (a Mande group) merchants in long-distance trade (Wilks 1961, 1962, 1982; Goody 1964; Nowak 1974; Perinbam 1980). The identification of merchants arriving on the Mina Coast is just a hypothesis, however. The very title of Caramansa, even though it appears in many sources, is subject to dispute, as this ruler was obviously not part of the Mande people (Terray 1995: 56 and 66, footnote 132). The remaining words noted by Delafosse, with the exception of one – *chocque chocque* – to which we will return later, were in Akan.

I now quote the entire text of the dictionary that is of interest to us, in its original form, except for the words *manse* and *caramanse* described above:

> In this country merchants are called *berenbues*. Gold is called *chocqua*. Water is called *enchou*. Be welcome, one says *berre bere*. To make love is called there *chocque chocque*. *Barbero* is a child. *B*(*l*)*aa*, is [the color] white. *Barbero blaa* is a white child. Cloth is *fouffe*. *Couque roucq* is a chicken. *Couque roucoucq agno* are eggs. *Bora* is a ring (bracelet) to place on one's arm, made of brass. *Dede* means good. *Fanionna* is bad, etc.
>
> En ce pays la, les marchantz s'appellent *berenbues*. L'or s'apelle *chocqua*, l'eau s'appelle *enchou*. Vous soyez les bien venus, l'on y dict *berre bere*. Et le jeu d'amours, on y dict *chocque chocque*. *Barbero*, c'est ung enfant. *B*(*l*)*aa*, c'est blanc. *Barbero blaa*, c'est ung blanc enffant. Toile, c'est *fouffe*. *Coucque roucq*, c'est ung poullet. *Coucque roucoucq agnio*, ce sont oefz, *Bora*, c'est ung anneau a bouter au bras, de letton. *Dede*, c'est bon. *Fanionna*, c'est mauvais, etc. (Delafosse-Escudier: 28).

It is also worth mentioning that *berre bere* has been confirmed by Rui de Pina and João de Barros to mean a greeting or salutation (Pina-MMA 1952: 8–14; Barros-Cidade: 80–81). Beside this, there is some controversy as to the words *barbero blaa* – a white child. There is no evidence that the Africans met any white children during the first voyages by Europeans to Africa, and during later expeditions white children were a sporadic and rather rare occurrence. Why

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then did this word find itself among, apparently, the most useful words written down by the author of this dictionary? Two explanations have been proposed: (1) this word was used for ship's boys (nothing, however, seems to indicate that they were that young); (2) that it concerns African albino children (Margarido 1972: 323–324). This surmise seems the most improbable one because the usefulness of such a term in Delafosse's dictionary is nil. But there is a third possibility: that either Delafosse or the copyist made a mistake and in reality the word *blaa* was referring to the next word – cloth, which would then make the word mean 'white cloth' (Hair 1966b: 56; Dalby, Hair 1968: 129; Delafosse-Escudier: 120). This is the most likely explanation, if we assume that the author noted words that would have been most useful to a European merchant.

I would now like to consider the set of words that make up the little dictionary, and the author's intentions. I take it as given that the author noted the words that he found, be it intentionally or unintentionally, to be the most important and useful. Unfortunately, the dictionary ends with the term 'etc.' We cannot be sure whether this is Delafosse's own intention, or whether a copyist decided to cut short the list, finding it uninteresting. In the first case, the list would be exactly as Delafosse had wanted it to be. In the second it would not be. That is why our assessment can only be hypothetical.

In any case, the words in the list belong to several different categories. We have a greeting. However, there is no goodbye. There is a set of words pertaining to people – 'ruler,' 'white' (this word could refer to both the skin color of the Europeans and also to the color of the merchandise), 'merchant,' and 'child.' The inclusion of this last word indicates that it was not only adults that were bought as slaves by the Europeans. The characteristic goods that changed hands between the Europeans and the people of the Gold Coast were gold, cloth and brass rings (*manilhas*). In the category of foodstuffs and other small trade goods we find the words 'chicken' and 'egg' in the dictionary as well as the essential word 'water.' The appraisal of goods and agreeing or disagreeing with something or someone was conveyed using only two words: 'good' and 'bad.'

There are, however, several important words that are, surprisingly, not on the list. There are no words for 'slave' and for the large metal basins that were mentioned as a very important trade good by the author. Nonetheless, we can consider Delafosse's dictionary to have been a basic tool intended for the European merchant. For the modern researcher, the specific list of words suggests the most basic conversations that probably took place between the European merchants and their African counterparts. We can imagine that an elementary dictionary created by a soldier or a missionary would have contained somewhat different words. Although such dictionaries appeared quite regularly in the centuries that followed, Delafosse's is quite unique for its own time.

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There is one word in the dictionary that cannot be associated with any African language. This word is *choque chocque*, for lovemaking. This is not the author's invention. We find a similar word in John Barbot's extensive dictionary in the form of *hoque* (Barbot 1732: 418; Barbot 1992: vol. 2, 746–747, 798), a term which is discussed by Dalby and Hair (Dalby and Hair 1968: 130). Many linguists have suggested that this word may be derived from the Portuguese *chocque* – to 'hit,' or 'bump,' in the same sense as 'shock' or the French word *choc.* L. Bourdon noted that the same word exists in Angola, a country geographically distant from the Gold Coast but also in the area of Portuguese cultural influence. Furthermore, the word *shuk-shuk*, with the same meaning, occurs in North Africa (Dalby, Hair: 1968: 130, about Bourdon's information, footnote 3; Hair 1994a: 131). It would therefore seem that this was a word derived from Portuguese 15th-century slang for making love, which had transplanted itself into some African languages. The second possibility is to see in this expression an early example of some kind of pidgin used by the parties to communicate.

Eustache Delafosse was Flemish, so it is possible that he might not have known this Portuguese word and took it to be of African origin. It is now known that this word was already being used by Africans as early as 1480. In the later part of his story, Delafosse recounts how one young woman followed him around and kept offering him *chocque chocque* so that he would forget about a brass basin that he had just lost in mysterious circumstances. The author claimed he did not take advantage of the woman's offer, but he reasoned that the woman must have cast a spell on him, since the basin was never found again (Delafosse-Escudier: 30).

The very fact that the word *chocque chocque* was adapted from Portuguese so quickly and then spread over large parts of Africa, indicates just how important this form of physical contact was, even in those early stages of exploration. Delafosse's dictionary was meant for merchants, but this expression most probably proved useful to other members of the first expeditions as well. Moreover, we have evidence from as early as the 15th century that not only Europeans learned African expressions, but Africans living in Guinea (and not only those who were taken to Europe) were learning Portuguese words.

• • •

I have limited all my comments involving communication between Europeans and Africans to the 15th century and hence, to the very first contacts. I would, however, like to emphasize that in the years and centuries that followed, the number of interpreters grew as did the number of authors who created

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dictionaries. Maurice Delafosse indicated that the National Library in Paris is in possession of a manuscript of a dictionary dating to the 16th century (Delafosse 1931: 5). Dalby and Hair discuss the dictionary of the Kra language written down by the French merchant Jehan Lamy in the 1540s, and the Kra and Akan language dictionaries from about 1555 noted by the English merchant William Towerson and published by Hakluyt (Dalby, Hair 1964: 174–191). Extensive dictionaries, in conjunction with phrase books originating from the Gold Coast in the 17th and 18th centuries, were mentioned in the descriptions of Pieter de Marees from 1602 (Marees-Dantzig, Jones: 243–259), of Müller from 1673 (Müller 1983), and of Barbot from 1732 (Barbot 1992). Vocabulary of a medical, botanical, and zoological nature was also collected – such as in the account of Paul Erdman Isert from 1789, for example (Isert 1989). Missionary work necessitated in-depth knowledge of the various African languages. In this chapter I have concentrated only on those 15th-century events and consequent occupations (interpreters and the authors of the first dictionaries) that assumed greater significance in modern times, but whose beginnings go back to the time of the first Portuguese expeditions to Africa.

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CHAPTER 4

Astonishment, Wonder and Curiosity

Among the many feelings and emotions evoked by the first contacts between Europeans and Africans, those most often mentioned in the sources are fear and the courage that accompanied it. In second place, there was astonishment and wonder, which gave rise to curiosity. In studying the descriptions of the latter we encounter a problem that is characteristic of all psychological analyses of contacts between Africans and Europeans. We learn about the emotions and reactions of the Europeans from themselves, whereas we know about the analogous reactions and emotions of the Africans only indirectly, through fragments of these same European sources. These texts are variously reliable in relation to Europeans; they are even harder to analyze critically in relation to Africans.

Common experience would suggest that the sense of astonishment must have been particularly strong during the first contacts and to have decreased with their repetition. However, the chronicle by Gomes Eanes Zurara of the earliest Portuguese expeditions to Africa contains less information on this subject than on the subject of fear and courage. Perhaps Zurara's aim and the nature of his text were the deciding factors. For the Portuguese knights, their heroic deeds and services were most important (Carvalho 1953a: 37–68; 1953b: 475–481; Bourdon, introduction in Zurara-Bourdon: 7–35; Małowist 1963; 1976). Astonishment was not part of the catalog of chivalric virtues. Zurara therefore wrote about courage and heroic battles, as well as the prince's pious desire to convert the pagans (Carvalho 1955–1956; Russell 2001: 120–121, 142–143, 151–153, 158–159, 198, 251; Tymowski 2003). The explorers' feelings of astonishment and wonder were of less significance.

Zurara wrote much more about mutual curiosity – European and African. The subject was familiar to him because at Henry the Navigator's court curiosity was strongly emphasized as one of the reasons for undertaking the expedition. Such curiosity was to be satisfied by the collection of information about Africa, its inhabitants, natural conditions, fauna and flora. These activities were deliberate and systematic. Not only were stories of explorers collected, but prisoners were brought from Africa to Portugal to be interrogated (Zurara-Soares: 104, 106; Münzer 1854: 351; Russell 1995a: 9–11; 1995c: 9; 2001: 130–132). Satisfying curiosity had a theoretical aim, but it was primarily practical – it allowed the next expeditions to Africa to be more efficiently organized.

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The narratives that were written by people who actually took part in the expeditions, and eyewitnesses to the events, were different in nature. Peter Russell has analyzed and called attention to the particular importance of these narratives as sources (Russell 2009). There was room in these texts for descriptions of personal experience, and for the expression of the writers' own emotions. In as much as the information contained in Zurara's chronicle can be considered an expression of the collective experience of the expedition participants, filtered furthermore through Zurara's general goal in writing the chronicle, the narratives of witnesses reveal their individual experiences and spontaneous reactions. We can generalize about people's feelings and emotions when the information in these two types of sources accords and is repeated, independently of one source or the other.

In Zurara's chronicle, curiosity and the desire to learn about unknown lands and peoples was listed as one of the five main reasons for undertaking the expedition to Africa (Zurara-Soares: 63–64). The chronicler mentions this reason several times later in describing individual expeditions. During the expedition of Gil Eanes in 1444, 20 crew members went on shore in the vicinity of Cabo Blanco 'to see what the land was like' (Zurara-Soares: 139; Zurara-Beazley: 77).

In his description of Dinis Dias's expedition to the 'land of the Negroes,' also in 1444, the chronicler describes two emotions. The motive of the knight captaining the caravel was that 'he was a man desirous of seeing new things and of trying his strength.' As to the Africans, Zurara wrote of their astonishment and wonder. During this expedition, the Africans, at the sight of the caravel sailing along the coast:

> marvelled much at the sight, for it seemeth they had never seen or heard speak of the like; and some of them supposed it to be a fish, while others thought it to be a phantom, and others again said it might be a bird that ran so on its journey over that sea (Zurara-Beazley: 99).

> da qual coisa foram muito maravilhados. Pois segundo parece nunca haviam visto nem haviam ouvido falar de semelhante [coisa]; porque uns presumiam que era peixe, outros entendiam que eram fantasma; outros diziam que podia ser alguma ave que corria assim andando por aquele mar (Zurara-Soares: 176).

Having talked about the novelty among themselves, four of the Africans bravely got into a boat to investigate the mystery. They came fairly far into the sea, toward the caravel, which continued on its course. Part of the Portuguese crew

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'could not restrain themselves from appearing on deck.' When the Africans saw that there were people on the caravel, they fled as fast as they could. The Portuguese wanted to pursue and catch them, but the wind was too light.

After a time, the caravel met another boat, and again the Africans were terrified on seeing people in it, and tried to get away. This time conditions favored the chase and the Portuguese managed to catch four men, 'and these were the first to be taken by Christians in their own land.' It can be imagined that the four prisoners were interrogated in Portugal and that it was from their confessions that Zurara learned in such detail about the first reactions of the Africans to the sight of the caravel. The news that on first view the caravel was taken for a great fish was repeated by Zurara in another part of the chronicle (Zurara-Soares: 364). That must have been one of the motifs of the stories that circulated in Portugal about earlier travels to Africa. In 1455, the Venetian Alvise da Ca da Mosto heard the same thing. According to him, when the Azeneg first:

> saw sails, that is, ships [...] they believed that they were great sea-birds with white wings, which were flying [...] some of them [...] thought that the ships were fishes [...] others again said that they were phantoms [...] This I know is testified to [...] by numerous Azenegs who were slaves in Portugal.[...] It may be judged how strange many of our ways appeared to them [...] (Crone 1937: 20–21).

> [...] hebeno la prima vista de velle [...] credeteno che quelli fosseno uxelli grandi con ale bianche [...] alguni de loro credeano fosse pessi [...] alguni de loro diceano che lierano fantasme [...]. Questo se puol certificar per molti de i diti Azanegi che soni schiavi in Portogallo [...]. Siché podeti considerar quanto costoro gierano novi a le cosse nostre [...] (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 29–30).

The rapid movement of the caravels, and thus the Portuguese ability to attack in unexpected places, was particularly terrifying to the Africans. The Africans' astonishment and wonder was accompanied on the one hand by fear, but on the other by a curiosity so strong that they couldn't resist taking the risk of paddling to the caravel to look it over.

Some feelings and emotions on the part of the Portuguese are concealed in the analyzed fragment; they are unnamed but are present and can be reconstituted. Dinis Dias was motivated not only by curiosity and a desire to display courage, but also greed and the desire for plunder. His more down-to-earth aim, though, was to catch slaves, as is proven by the caravel's chase after the

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boats. In the background of the scene described by Zurara, there is also the curiosity of the crew. The crew members, doubtless on the captain's orders, were in hiding, but when the boat with the Africans approached, the Portuguese couldn't resist going on deck. They were no doubt inspired by curiosity rather than by fear of attack, which would have been easy to repulse.

When João Fernandes, who had spent a long time among the Berbers, succeeded in initiating some trade, the Africans' trust of the Portuguese was such that they began to come on board the caravels. They even brought with them their wives, 'who above all desired to see that novelty' – *mulheres que sobre tudo, desejavam ver aquela novidade* (Zurara-Beazley: 111; Zurara-Soares: 197). The Africans' fascination with the caravels was manifested in the carving of a particular ivory saltcellar at the turn of the 15th century, which probably originated from the area of Sierra Leone. Its cover is crowned with the figure of a caravel with a stork's nest, from which a Portuguese sailor looks out (fig. 14).

Zurara wrote several times of the Africans' inquisitiveness, which was so great that they took the risk of going onto the caravels. Sometimes, though, this action was not motivated solely by curiosity. It had a practical significance – to learn whether it would be worthwhile to fight, or in order to engage in trade. In 1445, on the caravel of Gonçalo de Sintra, near Tider Island, a young Azeneg came voluntarily on board, claiming that he wanted to sail with the newcomers to their headquarters. Having looked over the ship, its equipment and crew, he fled during the night, taking necessary information back to his people (Zurara-Soares: 156–161). In that same year, African scouts also boarded the caravel of João Gonçalves Zarco (Zargo) in order to gain information for their community about the strength of the Portuguese (Zurara-Soares: 434–436).

Battle did not always break out when Africans boarded the caravels. Sometimes trade ensued, as during the 1445 expedition of Gomes Pires, who tried hard, if unsuccessfully, to establish contact with the Africans in the area of Cabo Verde. On the return trip, however, in the vicinity of Arguim, he managed to begin trade with the Moors. The Africans:

> showed such confidence that without any hesitancy so many entered into the caravel, that he [Pires] was not very well pleased, and would not consent that any more should enter [...] (Zurara-Beazley: 194).

> mostraram-lhe tanta confiança, que sem qualquer embaraço, entravam tantos em sua caravela, que a ele já não aprazia, nã consentido por isso que mais entrassem (Zurara-Soares: 368).

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Similarly, the first, successful contact (in 1447) between the Danish knight Valarte and a local chief of the Serer named Guitenyia resulted in many visits by the locals to the caravel – for purposes of negotiating, and trading (Zurara-Soares: 533–543; Tymowski 2008a: 61–74). Over the next decades, Africans boarded caravels so frequently that this became commonplace. It no longer carried the same risks as in the first years of making contact and was no longer caused by curiosity.

In places where the caravels arrived for the first time, their novelty excited curiosity and wonder constantly. In turn, Zurara noted that the Portuguese, having sailed toward some as yet unknown coast, 'found many things there different from this land of ours' – *acharam ali muitas coisas desvairadas desta terra* [...] (Zurara-Beazley: 100; Zurara-Soares: 177).

Astonishment and wonder were therefore most often the result of surprise. The Africans in particular had had little opportunity to prepare for the arrival of the Portuguese, although we have proof of the transfer of information between various peoples of the coast and even those of the interior (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 85; Delafosse-Escudier: 26). The Portuguese, for their part, were counting on novelties and unexpected experiences, and it was not only and not as much 'the newness of things' that astonished them as the divergence between what they expected to see and what they saw.

During Nuno Tristão's expedition to the Berber stretch of the African coast, probably in 1443, the Portuguese sighted boats manned by naked Africans, rowing with their legs. From afar the Portuguese took these boats for giant birds – exactly as the Africans had seen the caravels. The Portuguese thought thus, because, according to Zurara, 'they considered it might well be [...] in a part of the world where other marvels greater than this were said to exist' – *pensaram que podiam ser em aquela parte, onde se contava de outras maiores maravilhas* (Zurara-Soares: 110; Zurara-Beazley: 59). Such an expectation of oddities and wonders in the unknown parts of Africa was not exceptional. In a letter to his creditors written in 1455, Antoniotto Usodimare gave much reliable information on commerce but combined it with much that was fantastical. He wrote about unicorns and about people with tails who ate their own children (Usodimare 1971, 1993, 1999). People with tails were mentioned also in the account of Diogo Gomes.

The Portuguese knight was remembering his expeditions when he was of advanced age, toward the end of the 15th century. He was informed by his own experiences and by several later ones of other people. He was aware of the fairytale nature of much earlier information, of the fantasy of the informants, and of their intent to mislead the newcomers. But those who first sailed to Africa could expect various marvels, in accordance with medieval imaginings

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about the unknown and distant world. What they encountered, however, were people – only very different people of very different cultures.

The confrontation of medieval imaginings about marvels with the sight of the Africans who, although foreign and very different, clearly belonged to the same human race as the Portuguese, was an experience that deeply altered the explorers' worldview (and subsequently that of other Europeans), and undoubtedly that of the Africans as well.

Among the eyewitness accounts of expeditions, Ca da Mosto wrote the most about his own emotions, those of other Portuguese, and those of the Africans. From the people in Infante Dom Henrique's circles, he drew a description of the causes for undertaking the expeditions, which accorded with what Zurara wrote. The Infante was 'desirous to learn new things, particularly of the peoples dwelling in those lands' (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 7; Crone 1937: 2). When the Infante's envoys persuaded the Venetian to undertake an expedition to Africa, they spoke, naturally, about the prospect of great and entirely certain profits, but in addition, they spoke about how the prince:

> had for some time past caused seas to be navigated which had never before been sailed, and had discovered the lands of many strange races, where marvels abounded (Crone 1937: 5).
>
> como da um certo tempo in qua havea fato navigar mari, dove mai per altri furono navigati, e discoverto terre de diverse generatione stranie, fra le qualle se atrovava cosse mirande (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 12).

In deciding to make the expedition to Africa, Ca da Mosto was counting in first order on 'honour and profit.' But among the most important motives for proceeding, he also mentioned curiosity:

> [...] for I was young, well fitted to sustain all hardships, desirous of seeing the world and things never before seen by our nation (Crone 1937: 5).
>
> vedendomi zovene e ben disposto a sostegnir ogni faticha, desideroso de veder del mondo e cossa che mai algun de la nostra nation non havea vista (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 13).

It was not only before but also during both of his expeditions that the Venetian's decisions were guided as much by curiosity as the desire for profit. When the ruler of the Wolof, Budomel, invited him to his headquarters deep inland, Ca da Mosto took the risk, trusted the ruler, and went there, observing:

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> my journey inland was indeed to see interesting sights and obtain information than to receive my dues (Crone 1937: 36).
>
> e certo el mio andar fra terra non fo meno per veder e intender alguna cossa nova, cha per reschatar el mio pagamento (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 50).

He thus placed – in his memoirs – the desire for knowledge on the same level as the commercial motive. That these were not empty words is proven by the remainder of the account, in which Ca da Mosto describes exactly what he saw and experienced in Budomel's state. Furthermore, he saw more than just what he was shown. On his own initiative he went to a market 'to see further strange sights' (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 69; Crone 1937: 49).

After his stay with Budomel, Ca da Mosto decided to sail further, beyond Cabo Verde, to:

> another kingdom called Gambia, where the negroes who had been carried off to Spain, or rather to Portugal, said there was gold [...]. Hence I, moved by the desire to find this gold, and to see further novelties [...] and returned to [my] caravel (Crone 1937: 52).
>
> un altro regno, osia paexe, chiamato Gambra; nel qual, contava i Negri che vegneano conduti in Spagna, osia in Portogallo, [...]. Onde io, moso dal desiderio de atrovar questo oro, et ancho per veder diverse cosse [...] me redussi a la mia caravella (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 73).

Once again, curiosity and the desire to learn about new lands and people, and the desire for profit, were listed as the two equal motives for the Venetian's actions.

Ca da Mosto was a penetrating observer of his African partners. During talks, he asked not only about trading conditions, goods, and the organization of the societies with which he came in contact; he noticed and attempted to understand the reactions of the Africans to the appearance of the Europeans, and asked them for their opinions and impressions.

In his account we can find several levels of reactions by the Africans to the novelties they saw. The first such is as in Zurara's description: astonishment and wonder at the sight of unknown objects and people. The Africans at the market were astonished by the Venetian's looks. They wondered at his clothes and the whiteness of his skin. He wrote:

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> Some touched my hands and limbs and rubbed me with their spittle, to discover whether my whiteness was dye or flesh (Crone 1937: 49).

> et algun me tochava le man e le braza e con spudaza me fregava, per veder se la mia biancheza giera tentura over carne (Ca da Mosto-Laporace: 68).

This was justified as, in the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa, the body is often colored for rituals, including with the color white.

Budomel and his entourage expressed astonishment combined with admiration when Ca da Mosto gave a feast in their honor. The greatest sensation was created by the sight of the caravel and its equipment. The Africans trusted the newcomers and went on board, guided by curiosity and the desire for advantageous trading exchanges. Ca da Mosto noted several such boardings in the land of the Wolof (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 70). On the Gambia River, negotiations were entered into with the local ruler, Batimansa, 'friendship' was established, and trade began.

During the travels in 1460 of Pedro de Sintra to the coast of today's Liberia, a boat carrying Africans approached the caravel. The interpreters could not make themselves understood. Nevertheless, 'three of the Blacks boarded the caravel as curiosity was stronger than caution and the fear of danger' (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 125).

Ca da Mosto observed and wrote down which objects and abilities of the Europeans particularly amazed and aroused the curiosity of the Africans:

> our crossbows, and above all, our mortars […] the sound of one of our country pipes […] seeing that it was decked out with trappings and ribbons at the head, they concluded that it was a living animal that sang thus in different voices […] perceiving that they were misled I told them that it was an instrument […] whereupon, recognising that it was made by hand they said that it was a divine instrument, made by God with his own hands […] They were also struck with admiration for the construction of our ship, and by her equipment – mast, sails, rigging, and anchors. They were of the opinion that the portholes in the bows of ships were really eyes […] They said we must be great wizards, almost equal of the devil, for men that journey by land have difficulty in knowing the way from place to place, while we journeyed by sea, and, as they were given to understand, remained out of sight of land for many days yet know which direction to take […] They also marvelled much on seeing a candle

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> burning in a candlestick [...] to them the sight of the candle, never seen before, was beautiful and miraculous (Crone 1937: 50–51).

> como è fra le altre lo artificio de le balestre, e molto più de la bombarda [...] se meraveliava del sonar de una de queste nostre pive de la villa [...] e vedendola vestida a divisa e con frape in su la testa, se dete a intender che' l fosse qualche animal vivo, che cossì cantasse de diverse vose [...] e visto pur che giera instrumento fato a man, dixeano quella esser cossa celestial e che Idio l'avea fata con le sue man [...]. Anche molta admiration prendeano dell'arteficio del nostro navillo e de li aparechi de esso, e de l'arboro, velle, e ànchore; e ancho se devano a intendre che li ochii che se fano a prova a di navilli fosseno veramente ochii [...]. E poi dissea che nui altri dovevemo esser grandi incantadori [...] digando che li homini che andavano per terra haveano faticha de andar de un luogo a l'altro, che nui andavemo per el mar, e che haveano intesso, che'l iera sì gran cossa [...] E più se meravegiava grandemente de veder arder una candella de note in su uno candelero [...] li parse una bella cossa meravegiosa (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 70–71).

Seeing their curiosity at the candle, Ca da Mosto had a new candle made and lit it before the eyes of one of the Africans, which produced even greater surprise. The Venetian explained to the African the action of other tools and instruments. He observed their reaction and commented on it later. Thanks to him, we know that the Africans did not stop with the satisfaction of their first, superficial curiosity. They tried to understand the actions of the tools, noted the Europeans' ability to find their way at sea and asked themselves how it was done. These attempts at understanding the function of objects and how they worked (which Ca da Mosto explained to his visitors) was a second level of reaction to the sight of surprising things. If an explanation was not found or was not understood, then the tool or ability was ascribed to the use of a supernatural power.

The third level of curiosity and desire to understand these new things concerned divine, supernatural matters. Ca da Mosto left the most precise and penetrating account of this in writing of his talks with Budomel. It was the latter who initiated the discussion; he asked the Venetian many questions and compared what he heard about the religion of the Europeans with what he knew of Islam. Budomel desired to know as much as possible; he wanted to clarify for himself the cause of the newcomers' unusual abilities and to determine whether their religion could be attractive or useful to himself and his people (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 57).

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Budomel's questions concerned God and the manner of explaining the world and man's place in it. He was thus exhibiting, in these talks, a curiosity about the Europeans' worldview. Later, however, in 1489, an attempt to Christianize the Wolof had a chiefly political aspect on the side of their ruler Bemoi (Bumi Jeleen – see more in Part 2, Chap. 8).

Similarly, practical and political considerations induced the ruler of Benin in 1515 to establish negotiations with the Portuguese and to accept in his state a Christian deputation and mission, whose activities – controlled by this ruler – were in any case short term and did not bring any results (Ryder 1969: 42–53). The Christian god clearly interested some of the African rulers, although they retained the prerogative of accepting a mission or ending it.

Equally, the Africans' gods were of interest to the European newcomers. Curiosity played a certain role here, but practical considerations were more important. One of the major official aims formulated by Henry the Navigator for his African activities was the conversion of Africans. Acquiring and collecting information about their gods, beliefs, and ceremonies was necessary to determine the best method of Christianization. Yet it was difficult to get information about the Africans' beliefs. Matters of faith are among the most complex and intimate issues, hidden from outsiders – both in the social and in the individual dimension. Furthermore, in the first period of expeditions, which consisted of raiding for plunder, acquiring information about local beliefs was almost impossible. It was obtained primarily from prisoners brought to Portugal. Zurara, in writing of their conversion, calls attention to the fact that the Muslim faith of the Azeneg was not as fixed as it was among the Moors who lived in North Africa. As to the black Africans, he wrote that:

> they have souls, like the others, and all the more as these blacks were not of the lineage of Moors, but of Gentiles, and so the better to bring into the path of salvation (Zurara-Beazley: 55).
>
> também tinham almas como os outros, quanto mais que estes negros não vinham da linhagem de Mouros, mas de gentios, pelo que seriam melhores de trazer ao caminho da salvação (Zurara-Soares: 104).

In the description of Pedro de Sintra's expedition written by Ca da Mosto, there appeared comments on African 'idols.' The itinerary of de Sintra is discussed by Marie P. Laurent du Tertre (Ca da Mosto-Laurent du Tertre: 43, 247). On the Bissagos islands, sailors discovered huts in which there were 'wooden statues of idols' (*statue de idole de legno*). On the basis of what they managed to understand of the explanations of the local people, they concluded that these blacks

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were 'idolators and paid homage to these statues' (*sono idolatri e adorano quelle statue*). Similarly, on the coasts around the cape called then Sagres de Guinea (today in the vicinity of Cabo Verga, near Conakry), the sailors learned that the locals worshipped:

> statues of wood in the form of men. They also say that when they are about to eat or drink, they first make offerings to their idols (Crone 1937: 78–80).

> le statue de legno de forma de homini; e dicono che quando deno manzar o bever, offerisseno la vivanda a li idoli (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 119).

Finding those figures and acquiring information about the ceremonies of their worship must have made a large impression on the explorers. Some of these islands were named the Islands of the Idols (Dos Idolos – presently Los Islands, not far from Conakry). The name thus persisted and is used to this day. We find it not only in descriptions of expeditions (Mota 1950: 120), but also in Portuguese cartography concerning earlier explorations. Maps containing extensive Portuguese place names for points along the West African coast are reproduced in *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartografica* (PMC 1960: vol. 1, maps by anonymous authors from 1471 [plate 2], from the end of the 15th century [plate 3], from 1506 [plate 6], map of Pedro Reinel from about 1519 [plate 14]; Mota 1950: 120 *et seq*.).

In descriptions from the beginning of the 16th century by Duarte Pacheco Pereira and Valentim Fernandes there are numerous mentions of 'idols' (Fernandes 1951: 9, 61, 71, 75, 83, 85, 89, 101, 103, 171 footnote 166, 174 *et seq*., 194; Pacheco-Mauny: 75, 77, 81–83, 105, 111, 115, 121, 125, 133, 135, 180, footnotes 155 and 159). This proves the Portuguese's great interest in the faith matters of the locals, and that information on the subject was gathered extensively.

•••

Aside from the significance of these mentions and descriptions of local African rites for attempts at Christianization, these wooden 'idols and fetishes' were among the wonders and curiosities brought to Europe at the beginning of the second half of the 15th century as particularly interesting objects. The first mention in the sources, of the Portuguese selling wooden figures of African 'idols' and a sword in Flanders, comes from a sales receipt in 1470. The objects were purchased by Charles the Bold of Burgundy (Vansina 1984: 19, 34). This type of trophy must have been brought to Portugal earlier. From the beginning

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of the expeditions, not only acquisitions as valuable as slaves, but also objects and animals that were of lesser or no value but were curious, strange or indicative of the activities of the Africans or of African flora or fauna, were brought back. These items were proof that the brave sailors had reached distant lands and peoples and also satisfied the curiosity of those who had not sailed to Africa.

The first to receive gifts was the Infante Dom Henrique, to whom the captains of the earliest expeditions brought various plants, animals, and objects. In 1434 Gil Eanes, after sailing around Cabo Bojador, had dug up several plants (called *rosas de Santa Maria*) as proof of his achievement, and brought them back to Portugal (Zurara-Soares: 73). According to Théodore Monod, this plant cannot be identified (Fernandes 1938: 42, footnote 134). In 1435, Antonio Gonçalves brought fishing nets from the vicinity of the Rio de Oro (Zurara-Soares: 79). A similar acquisition was sent to the Infante from one of the expeditions of Diogo Gomes: as well as nets taken from the local fishermen, he sent seals they had captured (Gomes 1959: 16). Ordinary plants or objects of this kind were neither strange nor marvelous. They had no material value. They were rather material proof that the Portuguese knights had been on the stretch of African coast they meant to explore. The plants and animals showed, furthermore, that there was life in these distant lands. It had been feared, after all, that the further south one went, the more fiercely the sun would shine, until it burned up all life.

Other trophies were military in nature. In 1444, in the vicinity of Cape Verde, Gomes Pires engaged in battle with the 'Guineans.' The Portuguese shot with their crossbows, and the Africans used bows and arrows and hurled javelins. Several of the arrows and javelins were brought back as trophies to Portugal (Zurara-Soares: 366).

An impressive gift in the form of a live lion was brought to the Infante by Diogo Gil from his expedition in 1447 to the Moroccan coast of West Africa. The Infante sent the animal to Ireland, to one of his knights staying in Galway, 'for [he] knew that never had such a beast been seen in that part' (*porque sabiam que nunca semelhante* [*animal*] *em aquela parte fora visto*) (Zurara-Beazley: 278; Zurara-Soares: 529–530).

Ca da Mosto mentions many curiosities that were brought from Africa to Europe. In 1456, during his second expedition, he traded on the Gambia with the local ruler Batimansa. An elephant was hunted for the Venetian, from which he took back one foot, a piece of the trunk, several hairs and part of the meat, salted. All this he gave to the Infante Dom Henrique. In addition, Batimansa gave Ca da Mosto the foot of another elephant and a large tusk. The Infante later received this second larger foot and the tusk, and sent them 'as a

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worthy present' to his sister Isabella, wife of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 106–107; Tymowski 2011). Contact between the court of Burgundy and Portugal was quite active at the time (Costa Gomes, 2013). It can be concluded therefore that the curiosity cabinets of the dukes of Burgundy, which we learn of in connection with the above-mentioned purchase in 1470 of wooden 'idols' and a sword, had been established earlier, doubtless not long after 1456.

The Infante Dom Henrique's dispatch of curiosities to other European states and courts was a method of advertising Portuguese expeditions and achievements in Africa. It increased interest outside Portugal in the newly discovered lands and peoples. Besides Burgundy, major recipients were Flanders, Castile, and Italy, and the German countries and cities, particularly Nuremberg (Iwańczak 2005: 153–204). In his letter, written in 1495, Hieronimus Münzer from Nuremberg mentions many curiosities that had been brought from Africa, including parrots, ostriches, civets, crocodiles, camels, and even elephants and lions (Münzer 1854: 356, 358; Zurara-Bourdon: 256, footnote 4). Earlier than Münzer's text, Ca da Mosto wrote of parrots, monkeys, prosimians, civet hides and musk, fruit, and fabric, which he had bought in Africa in Batimansa's state (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 100). Only some of these objects and animals had practical value – the fruit, fabric, and musk. The others were brought to Europe and sold as novelties, for the sake of satisfying curiosity and for amusement. Of the prosimians, the Venetian wrote that they were bought for a song, for 10 coppers called *marchetti*, and that an ounce (28.2 g) of civet sold for 50 *marchetti*. The Venetian also bought parrots in Budomel's state. One type was 'similar to those brought from Alessandria,' while another was different and larger. Many of these parrots died on the return journey, but 'above 150,' which belonged to the Venetian and to crew members, survived. They were sold in Portugal for 'half a ducat each' (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 100). At the beginning of the 16th century the trade in parrots became quite common, as is shown by numerous mentions in the work of Valentim Fernandes concerning the trade and appearance of these birds (Fernandes 1951: 15, 31, 43, 99, 157, footnote 68). By then, parrots were relatively cheap, and accessible to ordinary people. Other curiosities remained more expensive and inaccessible – either on account of the risk involved in acquiring them or the cost of transport (for instance, crocodiles or lions), or their high cost in Africa.

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The early importation of ivory to Portugal from West Africa in the form of tusks is corroborated in the sources examined by Felipe Silveira de Oliveira Malacco

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(2018: 49–50; see also Tymowski 2011). In addition to the descriptions of Ca da Mosto and Diogo Gomes, and a passing mention in Hieronimus Münzer's work, the following documents concern trade in ivory: the royal regulation (*arrendamento*) from 1469 and the subsequent appeal (*reclamações*) of the Cortes concerning trade with Africa from 1472 (MMA 1958: doc. 65 and 68).

Among the most valuable and luxurious curiosities from Africa were ivory sculptures (see figs. 2, 10, 12, 14, 15, and 17). They were made by craftsmen of the Sapi group of people from the territory of Sierra Leone and by the craftsmen of the Edo (Bini) people of the Benin state. Sculptures from Sierra Leone were brought to Portugal from around 1490 in large numbers, until between 1530 and 1550. It is debatable when the sculptures from Benin began to be brought to Europe.

In Benin, works were cast in bronze using the lost wax method, and carved from ivory. The bronze sculptures were not intended for sale. They served the Benin rulers for the legitimization of their rule inside the state, regarding their own subjects. The Portuguese knew about these sculptures, as information about them had been provided by João de Barros at the end of the 1530s (Barros-Cidade: Decade I, book III, Chapter 3). But we don't know if they bought them in Benin in the first decades of the 16th century. On the other hand, some of the ivory sculptures were intended by the Beninese for sale (Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: no. 38–41). Most often, sculpted elephant tusks and saltcellars made of Benin ivory date from the turn of the 15th to the 16th century, that is, the same period in which sculpture was beginning to be imported from Sierra Leone.

Certain scholars questioned the Benin provenance of some or all of those sculptures from the early 16th century, ascribing them instead to the Sapi sculptors of Sierra Leone. Hypotheses concerning the cultural identity of the artists were advanced by William B. Fagg as well as by Ezio Bassani (Fagg 1959 XVIII–XX; Bassani, Fagg 1988: 61–148, see Chapters 3–6 for the Sapi sculptures and Chapters 7–8 for Edo sculptures). Alan F. Ryder, and after him, P. Mark, date the importation of sculptures from Benin to the second half of the 16th century based on the oldest written testimony (in 1588) of these imports (Ryder 1964: 363–365; Mark 2007: 199). The former draws attention to the hypothetical nature of the dating based on the *ex silentio* method in relation to the beginning of the 16th century. This dating seems to be overly cautious, while the problem of origin has not been definitely settled. Russell leaves the matter open (Russell 2001: ill. 21). Research carried out by the research group led by Vanicléia Silva Santos, with the participation, among other scholars, of Felipe de Oliveira Malacco and Thiago Henrique Mota, indicate that sculpted saltcellars should rather be associated with the region of Guiné do Cabo Verde, and

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especially Sierra Leone and the Sapi group of peoples (Santos 2018; Malacco 2018: 58; Mota 2018). Sculpted elephant tusks originated in both regions: in Sierra Leone and in Benin.

The sculptures made by the Sapi depicted local animals – crocodiles, snakes, leopards, birds, and moreover, horses, which had been brought to Africa. Images of people were also carved: the local people in hunting scenes, with weapons, and with ornaments, but also beautiful women. Portuguese dignitaries were represented in both regions in magnificent clothing, with weapons, sometimes on horseback, and with an entourage of squires and servants. I discuss the depiction of Europeans in the Sapi and Benin sculpture in Part 4, Chap. 13. Here I am considering these sculptures as objects that stimulated the curiosity of the purchasers. The representations of both humans and animals in these sculptures were exotic (see figs. 15 and 17).

At the beginning of the 16th century, Pacheco noted that:

> in this country [Sierra Leone] they make beautiful mats of palm-leaf and necklaces of ivory […] [A few pages after his first mention, the author expanded on the subject]: In this land they make ivory necklaces more delicately carved than in any other country, also very fine and beautiful mats of palm-leaf, which are call '*bicas*' [which are] very beautiful and good (Pacheco-Kimble: 96, 98).

> E nesta terra fazem hũas esteiras de palma muito fermosas e asy collares de marfin […] nesta terra se fazem os mays sotis collares de marfym e milhor laurados que em nenhũa parte, e asim fazem esteiras de palma, a que elles chamam 'bicas,' muito fermosas e boas (Pacheco-Mauny: 80, 84).

Ryder and Mark convincingly argue that these *collares* should in fact be *colhares* (*colheres*), or spoons. In European collections there are after all quite a number of spoons sculpted from ivory but no carved ivory necklaces (Ryder 1964: 364, footnote 5; Mark 2007: 196–199). Furthermore, another text by Valentim Fernandes mentions spoons:

> In Sierra Leone people are very skilful and creative; they make objects from ivory that are indeed wonderful, everything you ask them to make; some make spoons, others saltcellars, while others grips for daggers and other beautiful things.

> Em Serra Lyoa som os homẽs muyto sotijs e muy ẽgeniosas fazem obras de marffim muy marauillhosas de ver de todallas cousas que lhes mandã

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> fazer a saber hũus fazem colheyros outros saleyros outros punchos pera dagas e qualquer outra sotileza (Fernandes 1951: 96; Códice 1997: 111).

The importation of ivory sculptures is documented in an early customs account book for the years 1504–1505 from the Casa da Guiné, the only preserved text of this type from the early 16th century. Teixeira da Mota has published an excerpt from this book concerning the importation of sculptures (Mota 1975: 580–589). Between January and September 1505, the crews of six caravels declared 139 spoons and three saltcellars of ivory, in addition to the beautiful mats of palm-leaf mentioned by Pacheco Pereira. They were being transported by people of varying social position, from the captain of the castle in Mina to ordinary and auxiliary sailors.

The number of imported sculptures is no doubt underestimated. Some were not declared, even though the duty – a quarter – was based on small sums, that is, the value given for the sculpture either according to the African price, or lower than in Europe. It should also be remembered that the customs accounts book, which was rescued from fire and earthquake, concerns the period of the largest importation to Portugal of sculptures from Sierra Leone. About 150 such sculptures have been preserved to our day. Peter Mark assumes that these are 4–10 per cent of all such works brought to Europe. According to him, during the entire importation period the pieces numbered from 1,500 to 3,750 (Mark 2007: 189, 194). This is, of course, a hypothetical estimation, serving only to suggest the size of the import activity.

Art historians point to various sources and inspirations for this art. Among the Sapi of Sierra Leone, one source was the earlier stone sculpture of this region (Lamp 1983: 219–237; Bazzani, Fagg 1988: 48–49, 61–62, 79–80, 96). After coming in contact with the Portuguese, one of the main goods of value exported from Sierra Leone was ivory (Kup 1963: 120). I have listed the sources concerning the ivory trade in the 15th century elsewhere (Tymowski 2011: 433–441). Sculpting an entire tusk or creating smaller sculptures increased the value of the ivory. At the turn of the 15th to the 16th century, the sculptures of the Sapi had local characteristics, and to the Portuguese they were unexpected, exotic, and valuable curiosities. As the importation of these sculptures grew, their capacity to startle and surprise gradually disappeared. But their other qualities – such as beauty and a high price – remained. Furthermore, the Sapi sculptors found new inspiration. The Portuguese began to bring to them designs – primarily woodcuts and drawings, even by Albrecht Dürer – as models for commissioned works. Art historians have convincingly demonstrated the use of European designs by Sapi sculptors (Bassani, Fagg 1988: 64, 65, ill. 39, 442; 72–73, ill. 51–54; 76, ill. 60–63; 83–84, ill. 75–78; 99–110, ill. 109–133). European motifs of hunting that have been carved on elephant tusks have recently

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been studied by Luis Urbano Afonso and José da Silva Horta (2013), and by Thiago Henrique Mota (2018:84). These authors point to the combination of European imagery with motifs from local African cultures (Mota 2018).

The Europeans who arrived in Africa were themselves also models for the sculptors, in some cases quite early on in their shared history. For instance, a saltcellar presently in the Pigorini Museum in Italy shows a man in hose with a codpiece, in accordance with the fashion in Italy at the turn of the 15th century. This type of hose appears in Italian art for the first time in a scene of the Last Judgment painted by Luca Signorelli between 1496 and 1502, in the chapel in Orvieto. This peculiar European clothing was reflected in the art of the Sapi not long after its introduction to Europe (Vansina 1984: 34, description of a sculpture according to a cited work by Grottanelli 1975). The dating of some sculptures can be confirmed by the inclusion of other elements of Portuguese clothing. The Portuguese in the first decades of the 16th century wore a type of round skirt, as depicted on sculptures of ivory and bronze from the turn of the 15th century (see figs. 4–10). The skirt went out of fashion in the middle of the 16th century, a fact that was not lost on the African sculptors of this latter period (Struck 1923: 146; Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: 295, nos. 30 and 31, description by Stefan Eisenhofer).

Sierra Leone sculpture was additionally influenced by the Sapi's use of designs from India, borrowed from objects brought to them by the crews of caravels who had returned from Asia to Europe (Bassani, Fagg 1988: 50–51). This art developed, in addition, under the influence and through the intermediary of the so-called *lançados* and *tangomaos*, that is, Portuguese who had fled to Africa, settled there out of reach of royal authority, melted into the local society, and become trading intermediaries between the Portuguese and Africans. For this reason, the art we are discussing here is called Afro-Portuguese. While recognizing all the influences and patterns used by the Sapi sculptors, this was African, not Portuguese, art. Many scholars have written about the role of the Sapi in creating works of art destined for sale (Fagg 1959; Bassani, Fagg 1988: 19–20; Mark 2007: 191). Its African character is emphasized by Mark (Mark 2007: 190).

Although the beginning of this art is generally dated to the last decade of the 15th century, the date of its decline or, in fact, its end, is debatable. In former studies, the final point was considered to be the period of the Manes peoples' invasion of the Sapi territory, in the second quarter of the 16th century (Rodney 1970: 39–70). According to this theory, Sapi art manufacture was destroyed between 1530 and 1550 (Bassani, Fagg 1988: 147). But Adam Jones has questioned the view about the irreversibly destructive nature of the invasion (Jones 1981: 159–178). Recently, P. Mark has gathered documentation which

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confirms the existence of this art in the second half of the 16th and even in the 17th century (Mark 2007: 197–202). However, we are primarily interested in the earliest period, from around 1490 to around 1510. This period saw both the beginning and the flowering of this art, its greatest originality, and its role in Europe as a curiosity.

Occasionally, these sculptures, in addition to their function as decorative and luxury display items, had practical uses. The saltcellars, knives with carved ivory handles, and spoons that were sculpted by the Sapi were used for important ceremonies. A Gothic painting by Mestre do Paraiso from about 1520 in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon shows the Dormition of the Mother of God. On a table by the bed there is a bowl of fruit and an ivory spoon, such as those sculpted by the Sapi (Bassani, Fagg 1988: 85). It is iconographic proof that such spoons were imported by Portugal – as is shown by the written sources – and also proof of the use of such exotic spoons by more affluent people.

Obviously, the valuable sculptures of the Sapi ended up in Europe in the hands of very wealthy purchasers: rulers, the aristocracy, and urban patricians. In general, they formed part of the 'curiosity cabinets' that began to be established in the second half of the 15th century. Among the earliest of these collections were those of Henry the Navigator and the dukes of Burgundy. The best-known cabinets belonged to the Pope, the Medicis, Albrecht V of Bavaria, and to the Habsburgs (Bujok 2003: 57–142; Seipel 2000; Mark 2007: 198). The subject of cabinets of curiosities in Europe of the modern period has been explored by Krzysztof Pomian and Patrick Mauriès (Pomian 1987; 2012; Mauriès 2002). The best-preserved cabinet, although from a later period, is that of the Danish rulers (Le Fur, ed. 2006). Among the artefacts of the Danish collection, which is the subject of the Yves Le Fur catalog, were a carved elephant tusk from a Florentine collection (fig. 52), and saltcellars from Roman collections (fig 64) and those of the d'Este dukes from Modena (fig. 65). This catalog portrays objects in a royal collection. Among merchants, the best-known cabinets of curiosities were the 17th-century collection of Christoph Weickmann of Ulm and the Nuremberg collections (Jones 1994: 28–43). Of course, in these curiosity cabinets, or *kunstkammern*, all kinds of items from Africa and America were displayed, not only the ivory sculptures under discussion.

What interests us here is these sculptures' function, which is contained in the name 'curiosity cabinet.' These assemblages brought together exceptional items whose exoticism and difference stimulated people's curiosity. The items were material proof of European contact with peoples of very different cultures. Krzysztof Pomian even introduced the term 'culture of curiosity,' placing it between the 16th century and the first half of the 18th century, i.e., between

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the medieval culture of theology and the age of science (Pomian 1987, Chapter 2; for a general discussion about modern curiosities, see Evans, Marr 2006). Bringing objects from West Africa that aroused fascination, and collecting them for pleasure, offering them as gifts or selling them, is something the Portuguese began to do as early as the 15th century, much earlier than other Europeans did as part of the modern 'culture of curiosity.'

Several thousand sculptures from Sierra Leone and Benin were available to the wealthy and influential owners of curiosity cabinets. But before a magnificent saltcellar or spoon or sculpted ivory tusk could reach these collections, they went through the hands of people of many various social positions. The above-mentioned customs book of 1504–1505 reveals that ivory sculptures were being transported by the captain of the Mina castle, the local factor and intendant, a merchant, five sailors (one of whom was a mulatto, probably a freedman), and even two auxiliary sailors. The sculptures were known to all these people. The main aim of those bringing the items to Europe was, of course, a desire for gain, but we cannot exclude the possibility that these unusual objects also interested them.

•••

Since I am trying to study the mutual effect of contact on both parties, we should consider whether strange, peculiar or curious objects were brought in the other direction – from Europe to Africa. Taking into consideration the information about the first contacts mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that the majority of objects owned by the Portuguese were surprising and curious to the Africans. These included the caravel, the sailing equipment and ship's accoutrements, the Portuguese's clothing and weapons – and even their candles. Their reaction was spontaneous, a feeling of astonishment and wonder. None of these objects had been brought to Africa for the purpose of surprising the local people. But after the first encounters, on seeing the reaction of the Africans, the Europeans might thereafter have desired to astonish. Gomes Pires clearly tried to pique the Africans' curiosity, when he left on the shore – as I mentioned in the previous chapter – a cake, a mirror, and a piece of paper with the sign of the cross (Zurara-Soares: 365). None of these items had any practical importance: they weren't trading goods, but they might have aroused interest. Ca da Mosto certainly demonstrated for the Africans how to make candles and play the bagpipes to satisfy their curiosity.

The intention of stirring the interest or the curiosity of Africans, and thereby making them favorably disposed, was also the motive behind the feasts the Europeans organized in the early period of contact. Ca da Mosto, in undertaking to give a feast for Budomel, noted that the ruler 'accepted the invitation eagerly,

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wishing to see how we, Christians, live' (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 58). Among the other gifts Diogo Gomes presented to the ruler called Batimansa was:

> our wine, for they had no wine, except what is made from the date palm (Crone 1937: 96).
>
> vinum nostrum, quia vinum non habent nisi de palmis (Gomes 1959: 41; Sintra 2002: 78).

The uniqueness of this gift was supposed to arouse Batimansa's curiosity.

However, when the Africans began to trade with the Europeans, they were no longer directed by curiosity in their choice of goods to buy, but rather by utilitarian considerations. Soon, what the Europeans offered was practical: they sold horses, cloth, coats, metal goods (of iron and bronze), ornaments, beads, and salt (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 50; Gomes 1959: 35, 52; Delafosse-Escudier: 28, 30; generally about trade Małowist 1969a: 91 *et seq.*; Hopkins 1973: 87 *et seq.*). The prohibition on the sale of firearms or bladed weapons also had practical – military and political – significance.

A full list of African goods traded with the Europeans – besides the most important ones of gold and slaves – included ivory, wood, rubber, kola nuts, palm oil, leather, wax, palm mats, and food, and is given by Małowist (Małowist 1969a: *passim* and index, 624–625). Similarly, the African rulers sent slaves, ivory, food, and palm wine as gifts (Zurara-Soares: 538; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 50, 106). The Europeans ordinarily gave the Africans gifts of metal products or cloth, often (as early as the 16th century) simply a certain portion of the goods they brought to sell (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 97–99). The goods given to those Africans, who, as envoys of their rulers, went to Portugal to become better acquainted with their partners, were similar in nature (clothes, ornaments) (Zurara-Soares: 169–170, Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 126; Boulègue, Pinto-Bull 1966).

Thus in the first decades of the 16th century the presents that the Portuguese gave to Africans lost their uniqueness and became a form of payment. The proof is the lists of so-called *dadivas*, or gifts, handed by the crew of the *Santiago* in 1526 to the local chiefs on the São Domingos River and in Sierra Leone. These were *manilhas*, iron bars and lengths of cloth (Mota 1969: 542–543, 547, 552, 567). I assume that of the goods brought to Europe from Africa, from the 15th century and into the next centuries, it was the intriguing, curious, and exotic objects that constituted a significant part. On the other hand, the goods taken to Africa lost their novel character relatively quickly – over the course of only a few decades.

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PART 2

Encounters

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CHAPTER 5

Feasts

Making peaceful contact with the Africans turned out to be a difficult task for the Portuguese knights. After all, they had been trained in the efficient use of arms, not in conducting skillful negotiations or in making friendly gestures toward newly encountered peoples. In trying, on the orders of Infante Henrique, to establish some form of cooperation with the locals, they invited Africans on board the caravels and offered them gifts. Such presents were made up largely, but not exclusively, of food.

The earliest such attempt known to us was when, in 1445, Gomes Pires left three objects on the shore in the area of Cabo Verde: a cake, a mirror, and a piece of paper with a depiction of the cross. The cake was food, the mirror a curiosity, and the piece of paper with the cross expressed the desire of the Portuguese to convert the Africans. But these items sparked only the locals' distrust and anger. The desire to offer food was the most legible of Pires's intentions, but in conjunction with the two other presents, the cake aroused suspicion, perhaps of having been laced with poison. The Africans,

> when they came there and found those things, broke up the cake and threw it far away, and with their assegais they cast at the mirror, till they had broken it in many pieces, and the paper they tore, showing that they cared not for any of these things. (Zurara-Beazley: 192).

> eles, quando vieram e acharam assim aqueles coisas britaram o bolo e lançaram-no para longe, e com azagaias foram atirando ao espelho, até que o britaram em muitos peças e romperam o papel mostrando que nenhuma destas coisas curavam (Zurara-Soares: 365).

Pires's attempt was unsuccessful. Perhaps the cake alone would have stood a better chance.

The attempt made by the crew of the caravel of João Gonçalves Zarco (Zargo), also part of the 1445 expedition, went somewhat better. The vessel was commanded by Álvaro Fernandes. In the area of the island of Gorée (called Ilha da Palma at the time), two boats approached the caravel from the direction of the mainland with 10 Guineans on board. They made signs of peace to the crew of the caravel. The Portuguese could understand no more, as they had

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no interpreter. In any case, they believed the Africans and let five of them on board. Álvaro Fernandes received them as best he could:

> Álvaro Fernandes had them entertained as hospitably as he was able, giving orders to provide them with food and drink and all other good company that could be made them (Zurara-Beazley: 226–227).

> Álvaro Fernandes lhes fer fazer todo o acolhimento que pôde mandandolhes dar de comer e de beber com toda outra boa companha que lhes pôde ser feita (Zurara-Soares: 434).

After a time, the Africans left the ship, having expressed their satisfaction with the hospitality of the crew. In truth, it turned out later, the real purpose of the visit to the caravel had been to gain information about the arrivals and to prepare a sudden assault. A clash did indeed follow, during which the Portuguese captured two prisoners. But this does not change the fact that the gift in the shape of the meal was a sign of good intention that was understandable by both sides, and could have marked the beginning of peaceful contact.

The next attempt to make use of a common meal was made in the vicinity of the mouth of the Sine-Saloum River, by the Danish knight Valarte and a local chief of the Serer (Niominka) by the name of Guitenyia. I relate the history of this encounter elsewhere, and here I am interested only in the food and the meal as a means of establishing a relationship.

At the beginning of the discussions, Guitenyia gave presents to Valarte in the form of large quantities of food, and an elephant tusk. We can explain this abundance and choice of items in three ways. Firstly, the African chief was showing his good intentions and his commitment to the success of the talks. Secondly, he was reciprocating the earlier reception of his envoys, whom he had sent to the caravel and who were treated to a meal. Thirdly, he already knew the size of the crew (usually a caravel had about 20 sailors), and he wished to serve all of them. The elephant tusk was a gift that could lead to trade.

As we have seen, the expedition ended with Valarte's death. But the use by both sides of food as a gift that signaled friendly intentions, and the common eating of meals as the next level of engendering good relations, show that these gestures were understood and valued both by the Europeans and the Africans.

Examples of feasts that sealed the establishment of good and lasting contacts are given by Diogo Gomes and Alvise da Ca da Mosto. Many similarities appear in their accounts. One can assume on this basis that one of them

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influenced the other. Given the lack of additional information, however, we are unable to go beyond supposition. In any case, Diogo Gomes dictated his memoirs at the end of the 15th century, whereas the Venetian merchant wrote his not long after his return to his native city in 1463. The latter thus could not have made use of Gomes's written account. Did Ca da Mosto leave his own report in Portugal? We can't say, but both could have made use of stories being told in the milieu of Portuguese discoverers. The similarity of the descriptions of feasts in both accounts is not the only or the most important doubt. The attribution to one or the other of them of the discovery of the Cape Verde Islands led to stormy debates (for a summary of those disputes see Gomes 1959: 67–71, footnote 81 by Raymond Mauny, *ibidem* for older literature; also Leitão 1961; Leporace in: Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 88; Russell 2001: 295; Albuquerque, Santos 1991; Santos 1995: 2002).

Diogo Gomes recalled his discussions with the chief 'Nomymans,' who resided to the north of the mouth of the Gambia River. Some scholars identify this person as the local Mandingo chief Niomimansa, who ruled over the Bara region. In this case, his title would have been *Nomi Mansa* or *Niumi Mansa* (Mota 1946: 490–492; Gomes 1959: 63, footnote 42, 66, footnote 72 by Mauny). Other historians, George Brooks for example, identify this person as the chief of the Niominka people (Brooks 1993: 129). The Portuguese knight succeeded, by means of gifts, to dissipate the apprehensions of his African counterparts, who had until then attacked the arrivals. Talks followed, mainly about matters of faith, according to Gomes. The chief supposedly expressed the desire to reject Islam and accept Christianity from the hands of the Portuguese discoverer, as did the dignitaries and the women of his court. Niomimansa wished to adopt the name of Henry, in honor of the Infante Henrique. The dignitaries in turn wished to adopt the names of Jacob, Nuno, and others. Gomes, as a lay person, did not dare christen them, however. The following day, the knight invited this chief to the caravel:

> On the next day, I begged the King with his twelve principal chiefs and eight of his wives to come to dine with me on board the caravel, which they all did unarmed, and I gave them fowls and meat cooked after our fashion, and wine, both white and red, as much as they pleased to drink; and they said to each other that no nation was better than the Christians (Crone 1937: 98).

> Altera vero die rogavi regem cum suis duodecim senioribus et octo mulieribus ut iuisset mecum ad carauelam comedere, qui omnes fecerunt sine armis. Et dedi eis gallinas et carnes praeparatae juxta usum nostrum

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> et de vino albo et rubeo quantum ipsi bibere voluerunt, dicebantque inter inuicem, quod alia natio non esset melior christianis (Gomes 1959: 45; Sintra 2002: 80, 82).

On the return journey from the Gambia, in the coastal waters of the area of Cabo Verde, Gomes's caravel came upon two African boats. The interpreter informed the knight that on one of them was the chief named Bezaghichi – the 'lord of this land.' Gomes had mentioned him earlier when describing fighting between the Africans and the first Portuguese arrivals on this part of the coast (Gomes 1959: 29). After 10 years of fighting, Bezaghichi had become inclined to talk. Gomes, so he claimed, pretended not to know who he was dealing with.

> I made them [the chief and his people] come into the caravel, and gave them to eat and drink, and a double portion of presents (Crone 1937: 99).

> Et feci eos intrare in carauelam, et dedi eis comedere et bibere et munera duplata (Gomes 1959: 47; Sintra 2002: 84).

He then sent them ashore with an invitation for further friendly contact.

The fragments of Diogo Gomes's memoirs quoted above are doubtful in many ways. The titles of the African chiefs are corroborated in later sources, so the meetings seem real. But Niomimansa's fervent desire to be christened and Bezaghichi's readiness to come onto the caravel after he had quite recently been fighting the Portuguese seem suspect. It is possible that, remembering his travels 40 years later, Gomes confused various events and emphasized his own role. He nevertheless passed down to us some general knowledge about the importance of the shared meal in establishing friendly Portuguese-African relations.

The credibility of Ca da Mosto's description of the feast he gave in honor of Budomel, the ruler of Cayor, one of the Wolof states, is different altogether. According to this account, the feast took place after a long period of mutually beneficial trade, and following the Venetian merchant's long friendly discussions with that ruler. This feast crowned a fruitful meeting, and was not a short incident during a fleeting encounter.

The description of the feast is a small part of a larger narrative devoted to the negotiations and trade that took place between the Venetian merchant and the ruler of Cayor (Karpiński 1968; Boulègue 1987: 13–20; Małowist 1989; Tymowski 1991). More will be said about this meeting further on in the book. The passage about the feast that is of interest to us, however, has not been

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studied before. It is possible that this description was seen only as an insignificant but curious detail; then again, maybe it had something to do with how the story was transmitted.

The original of Ca da Mosto's work did not come down to us. We know that the author wrote it immediately following his return from Portugal to Venice, presumably in the years 1464–1465, but what we have are two manuscript copies, and these differ from each other. The first is called Manuscript A (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, Marc. Ital., cl. VI, 457/ – 10701/). The copy was made before 1507, when it (and some other manuscript that has since been lost) was used as the basis for the first printed version. The copy called Manuscript B was made later (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, Marc. Ital., cl. VI, 208/ – 5881/). It was presumably written down by a Franciscan monk, who has remained unknown. The copyist, similarly to the publisher of the 1507 edition – and in contrast to the creator of Manuscript A – divided the text into chapters, to which he gave titles. Moreover, this copyist added short negative comments about blacks and women. This was inconsistent with Ca da Mosto's unprejudiced attitude. These comments are discussed by Leporace and Marie-P. Laurent du Tertre (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: Introduction; Ca da Mosto-Laurent du Tertre: 170–177).

The first two printed versions of this source date from 1507 and 1550. In both cases, the text ended up as part of other descriptions of various travels. As I have mentioned, the 1507 edition was based on Manuscript A, and another copy, since lost (Paesi 1507). The publisher did not introduce many changes to Manuscript A. However, he did split the work into chapters that were slightly different than the divisions chosen by the writer of Manuscript B. The second printed edition came out in 1550. Ca da Mosto's text appeared in a collection of accounts that described several different journeys of discovery, published by Giovanni Battista Ramusio (Ramusio 1550). This version of Ca da Mosto's text is the most famous, most repeated, most quoted, and most translated of the two manuscripts and two printed editions. The name of the publisher was given only in the third edition, in 1563. This is the edition that was used in the work of Ca da Mosto-Milanesi.

Ramusio based his version of the works on Manuscript A or on a different but very similar manuscript. He was also aware of Manuscript B and, quite naturally, of the 1507 printed edition. In relation to both manuscripts and the earlier printed work, he implemented several grammatical corrections and other changes, and sometimes even omissions (about the omissions of Manuscript A in Ramusio's 1550 print edition, see Ca da Mosto-Laurent du Tertre: 189–190). Just as the copyist of Manuscript B did, and in the printed edition of

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1507, Ramusio divided Ca da Mosto's work into chapters. However, he also changed the order of some chapters and the order of some passages in places where he thought these changes were justified.

Thus there are differences between the two manuscripts and the printed editions from 1507 and 1550. The excerpt about the feast that is of interest to us is found only in Manuscript B. Therefore we ought to discuss the credibility of this text.

We know that copyists and publishers altered text in several ways. The changes included dividing the work into chapters, naming those chapters, rearranging the order of these chapters, making grammatical corrections and, finally, adding short evaluations. We can show that, in several places, some parts of the text have been omitted. However, in no case do we find that a large and significant part has been added to the text. The description of the feast would seem to be the exception. It appears that the description really did come from Ca da Mosto's original work and was left out in Manuscript A and, consequently, in the published editions which were based on this manuscript. This, however, is only a hypothesis. It should be borne in mind that this is not the only European-African feast known to us. This reinforces the credibility of the description in question. Its principal trait is not so much its uniqueness, as much as the extensive nature of its depiction of events. One can judge the credibility of this text if one analyses its content and compares it to the rest of Ca da Mosto's work. Let us first consider this part of the text, in English translation and in the original.

> About how I prepared a meal for them in the Venetian manner.
> One day, when we were celebrating together, I asked him to share a meal with me, one like we prepare in our city of Venice. He eagerly accepted the invitation, as he wished to see how we, Christians, live. I sent to the ship for my kitchen helper, who possessed great skills and instructed him not to spare anything that was on the ship. First, he placed a table with three legs, white table cloths, silver and metal, or pewter vessels; he ordered to prepare dishes of cooked and roasted meat, chopped meat, fish soup, fried and boiled fish flavored with almonds, sugar and delicate roots. While he did not serve much wine I was not concerned about it, because they drink water, but brought the best there was. When all necessary things were prepared, I ordered that the table be set under a large tree, and instructed that the lord be seated at the head of the table and ordered my sailors to bring successively the meals, with great respect, just as our lords are served. [Their] lord and all his barons were so amazed that they did not eat from their amazement; seeing as so many delicate

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> dishes are brought, they said in agreement that [even] in paradise one never eats such great dishes. After the meal was finished, I ordered that everything be taken to the ship, so that the sailors could also have some of it. Later, we talked continually about the charms of Italy and the nobility of Christians; the fact that we sit at a table gave him no peace, because they eat on the ground like animals.

> Como io li feci un pasto a la venetiana.
> Essendo un zorno in festa con lui, lo pregai che volesse far un pasto con mi, como se fa a la nostra citá de Venetia. Lui acceptò lo invito volentiera per veder lo modo che s'è fra cristiani in lo viver nostro. Mandai a nave per lo mio scalcho, che era cima de homo, e pregallo che non sparagnasse a roba che fosse in nave. Prima lui apparechiò la tavolla con trespedi, tovaglie bianchissime, vasi de arzento e di peltre, cioè di stagno; fece far vivande de carne alessa et arostita, tartare, pesci in broiti fricti et alessi, con alcuni saporiti de mandole cum zucharo e specie delicati. Vero he che de vin non hera tropo ben fornito, ma non curai perché loro beveno aqua pur ne fu portato del meglior che era. Et apparechiate tutte le cose necessarie, feci apparechiare sotto un grandissimo arbore la menssa, e feci seder lo segnor in capo de la menssa e portar le vivande ordinatamente da li mei marinari, con gran riverentie, secondo che se fa a li segnor nostri. Lo segnor con tutti quelli soi baroni stavano stupefacti e non manzavano per stupor; vedendo portar tante vivande con tanto ordene e reverentia. Io pregava el segnor che mazasse con li soi baroni; e gustando quelle vivande delicate diceano tutti che in paradiso non se manzò mai si boni cibi. Finito el pasto feci subito riportar tutte le cose a nave aciochè li marinari anche loro havesseno da godere. Poi continuamente parlamo de le zentileze de la Italia e de cristiani, ma non potea darse pace del nostro seder a la mensa, perché loro manzano in terra como le bestie (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 58, in footnote. French translation: Ca da Mosto-Laurent du Tertre: 100).

From the order in which the descriptions appear, it seems that the feast occurred after the two men had spent a long period of time getting to know each other, after Ca da Mosto's journey into the center of Budomel's state, and after satisfactory trade had taken place. The feast took place near the shore, as that was the only site to which the Venetian could transport from the ship the necessary food in the shortest possible time. The meal was a friendly gesture meant to repay the hospitality shown by Budomel to the Venetian. The banquet was also meant to serve several other purposes. Besides returning a favor

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and showing the African ruler respect, Ca da Mosto wanted to demonstrate some European customs to the ruler. The Venetian had spent much time closely observing the Africans, and in several instances in his descriptions he clearly highlighted that the interest was mutual (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 57–58, 68, 70, 81, 85, 99). It was not only the Venetian who wanted to find out about the life of the Africans, they too wanted to find out as much as they could about the visitors. The feast was a response to the interest shown by the Africans toward European culture. The Venetian merchant also emphasized in his description that he aimed to impress his trading partner by the feast. Finally, by hosting the banquet he hoped to maintain and entrench the friendly attitude adopted by Budomel and the noblemen of Cayor toward the newcomers.

Giving a banquet was in line with the instructions that Ca da Mosto had received – to get to know the Africans and to form lasting, peaceful ties with them. Hence the concordance between Ca da Mosto's aim and the course of the event serves to reinforce the credibility of the description. It is only the ending of the last sentence that is in discord with the tone of the rest of the work and the remaining part of the excerpt and their content. This short addition seems to be one of the many comments added by the copyist of Manuscript B.

It is quite difficult to decide whether the feast was held in a burst of spontaneity or rather whether the whole banquet was thoroughly thought out and planned in advance by Ca da Mosto. Much evidence, however, including the Venetian's ultimate aim, seems to point to the latter. He was a merchant and a well-educated person. The practise of sealing relationships through sharing rich feasts was known to him. The Venetians had been trading with people of different cultures in different surroundings for hundreds of years (Lane 1937). It could have been Ca da Mosto's experience of well-known commercial and diplomatic practises in cementing trade relations that informed his decision. It is also highly likely that he was aware of the literary and iconographic symbolism of the fictional feast as well as its meaning. Moreover, when organizing the feast, he could have used all the knowledge and experience of his Portuguese predecessors to avoid repeating their mistakes. There is a fundamental difference between the meals that the Portuguese had offered their African acquaintances earlier, and the feast given for Budomel. The latter took place as the conclusion of a long-established, successful trading partnership. Earlier meals had been organized on caravels, or other locations entirely controlled by the Portuguese. This factor alone would have limited the trust that was given – without incurring risks – by the Africans. The length of the meals was also limited, because holding guests on the caravel for longer periods could give rise to suspicion. The feast held by Ca da Mosto was organized on land, on

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terrain controlled by Budomel. It was the Venetian merchant who showed trust, and the favor he gained from the Africans was that much greater.

The great importance Ca da Mosto attached to hosting the Africans in an appropriate manner is reflected in the preparations for the feast, the utensils, and the dishes served. We know that the Venetian's caravel was very well stocked. After several months of sailing, however, there must have been some privations to the crew, even if some of the food stores had been replenished by African provisions. It is clear that the sailors would not have been completely indifferent to the feast that was, to them, a rather big sacrifice. One can deduce this from Ca da Mosto's orders to distribute the remaining food among them.

From the European party, only Ca da Mosto himself attended the feast. Although this is not mentioned directly, it is also probable that an interpreter was present at the time but that he did not take part in the feast. The sailors also did not participate and were there only to serve food. They were allowed to eat the remaining food only after the ceremony, on board the ship. This also seems to fit in with the other facts. After all, Ca da Mosto did make his way deep into Budomel's country all alone. He was thus showing his gratitude in thanking the ruler personally, not in the name of all the participants of the expedition. Undoubtedly, he also wished to stress his own position with respect to the rest of the expedition's members.

It is not possible to determine the roles played by the Africans during the feast or who the role-players were. The author claims that Budomel sat at the head of the table and hence at the most important seat. The wealthy and the powerful of his entourage also took part in the feast. This is shown indirectly, when Ca da Mosto recalls their comments on the meal. We are unsure of how many people were present and what part they played in the whole ceremony. We also do not know their names. In any case, in his entire description of Cayor, Ca da Mosto notes the name of one notable only, Bisboror, the nephew of the ruler and the chief of one of the villages. The Venetian had befriended this youth and held many conversations with him (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 50, 62). Brisboror, however, most probably remained in his village when Budomel and the merchant returned to the shore. We are unaware of any other names and their possible family connections to other notables. There is some information, however, that allows us to deduce the number of noble Africans of higher rank that usually surrounded Budomel. Ca da Mosto notes, on several different occasions, that there was a group of about 150–200 people who took turns at forming the ruler's retinue. The people in this group were not of equal social rank. When Budomel attended the very first meeting with the Portuguese, he was surrounded by an ostentatious entourage of 150 people on foot and 15 horsemen (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 50, 96). Taking into account the ex-

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pense of horses in this part of Africa and their ceremonial, symbolic and magical aspects, we can be almost sure that the 15 riders were a group of the highest notables in Cayor (Law 1980: 58–61 [prices], 164–168 [ceremony]). Can we thus be sure they also took part in the feast?

We come across one, surprising paradox in the description of the banquet. The notables praised the feast and commended the individual dishes, but 'were so stunned that they could not eat from their surprise.' We can interpret this inconsistency in two ways. The author did not write this, perhaps because he thought it obvious, but maybe after the initial surprise, the guests started eating. However, there is another explanation. In the chapter preceding the description of the feast, Ca da Mosto mentions that the rulers of the Wolof usually ate alone, without any company. From time to time, it did occur that the rulers let the Muslim marabouts, who tried to convert the Wolof to Islam, dine with them. The honor of dining with the ruler was also bestowed on 'one or two of their chief men' (Crone 1973: 41), *e uno over dui Negri de li principali* (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 58). Such information could possibly point to the remnants of a taboo, which required the ruler to eat his meals alone. This was a common custom in Africa, where the ruler would not only eat alone, but would hide when taking his meals (Egharevba 1934; Palau-Marti 1964; Makarius 1970: 668–698; Claessen 1981: 67 *et seq*., 82; Tymowski 2009: 49–51). A similar rule is also known to exist on other continents (Frazer 1922: Chapter 19, 182–183). Ca da Mosto's description seems to imply that such a taboo was already declining in importance in Wolof society, possibly under the influence of Islam, since – after all – it was the marabouts who were not obliged to respect it. Is it possible that some of the 15 noble riders were relatives of the ruler. In any case, the group of diners was probably not as large as 15. Most probably, a few people took part in the feast. Even if we assume that it was one or two people, this would make the group of guests only marginally larger. Ca da Mosto's lack of consistency can hence be explained in the following way. Only one or two chosen notables, who had a ceremonial or religious right to attend, actually sat at the table during the feast. The remaining people did not eat, but observed the ceremony and complemented the proceedings.

The description lacks some information that could have proved interesting. We know nothing of the speeches that were made. The Venetian mentioned only the comments made by the Africans during the feast and in later conversations on this topic. The tone of these comments and conversations seems to affirm that the aims of the feast had been achieved. This, of course, occurred because the Venetian used a well-known method of creating bonds between people that was understood and respected in many different cultures. This has been demonstrated in many anthropological studies concerning the past of

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Europe (Huizinga 1949: 47–50; Gurevich 1985; Margolin, Sauzet 1982; Laurioux 1989), and of many peoples and cultures outside Europe (Malinowski 1984 – first published in 1915: 174 *et seq.*; Kurczewski 1973). Recently, Jacek Banaszkiewicz has written about feasts against a wide comparative background (Banaszkiewicz 1992).

This research highlights the role of the feast as a typically human way of forming and strengthening friendly relations between its participants. Feasts used to and still do perform numerous practical and symbolic functions. When a feast's partakers belong to one community (be it a clan, a village, a tribe, a state, people employed by an institution, etc.), its aim is usually to make a festive statement of this oneness and to tighten the bond between its participants (Rigaux 1997: 169 *et seq.*). The period of the feast is usually associated with a heightened feeling of unity between the members of that particular community. When the partakers of the feast belong to different social, political, or linguistic groups, eating a meal together takes on a different meaning. The feast becomes a sign of growing partnership and friendship, or at least a temporary period during which acts and feelings of enmity or hate are suspended. A shared feast is the opposite of war and conflict. The location and occasion of a feast are generally taken to be a place and period of peace and mutual trust (Banaszkiewicz 1992: 95 *et seq.*). To violate this atmosphere of goodwill would be particularly offensive. At the same time, a feast is an occasion in which one side could exert psychological pressure on the other. This is done through the sheer lavishness of the meals and service, surprising entertainment during the feast, and speeches. These measures, however, should not influence the guests' feeling of well-being and comfort otherwise the feast would not fulfill its primary objective.

The feast given by Ca da Mosto for Budomel is, of course, the second type of banquet described above. People of completely different cultures, standing, and ways of living sat together around a table. The question remains, however: How did the Wolof receive and interpret Ca da Mosto's intentions? The description of the feast by Ca da Mosto, and of Budomel's and his court's later behavior, prove that the aim of the feast was accomplished and was understood by both sides. It took place because Ca da Mosto seemed to recall something that connects all people and is deeply encoded in the human consciousness.

The analysis of the description of the feast seems to indicate that both sides interpreted the ceremony similarly, but recognised certain differences. Placing the table under a great tree could have had a deeper, more symbolic, possibly a sacred meaning to the Africans, while the Europeans saw this only as a more comfortable place to eat. The greatest difference for the two cultures would

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have been the possibility of feasting with the ruler. Indeed, in 15th-century Europe there were protocols around prestige and social position. This could also have been the case in Africa, but there could have been the problem of a taboo that precluded eating with the ruling person as well.

Despite these perspectives, it is the similarity in how the feast was received and the degree of understanding that dominate the description. We have already discussed the means by which Europeans and Africans communicated with one another during the first expeditions. I analyzed the preparation of interpreters and the appearance of the first, short African dictionary. Those methods made use of skills acquired and knowledge gathered. But Ca da Mosto can also be associated with methods that made use of human emotions, and the understanding of symbols and ceremony. Jointly eaten meals and, later, specially organized feasts, initiated the period of collaboration in European-African relations.

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CHAPTER 6

First Meetings

One of the aims of the first Portuguese expeditions to Africa, as formulated by Henry the Navigator and written down by Gomes Eanes de Zurara, was to seek out the people living there. The Portuguese intended to fight Muslims, to conclude anti-Muslim alliances with Christians – should hopes of meeting any be fulfilled – and to convert pagans. They also expected to benefit from trade. In contrast to the Portuguese aim of war, which meant a continuation of the *Reconquista*, their other aims required peaceful contact with the inhabitants of Africa.

During the first expeditions, in addition to the aims laid out by the Infante, those of the expedition's participants were also very important. They sought fame, honor and material benefits. When they disembarked on land their principal goal was to plunder and capture slaves. The local inhabitants either offered armed resistance to the attackers, or fled to the hinterland where the assailants' raids could not reach them. Despite the invasions and the terror they aroused, the Portuguese made attempts at the earliest stage of the expeditions to obtain information about the locals and even to establish relations.

We know of attempts made in 1444–1445 by Gonçalo de Sintra and João Fernandes (Zurara-Soares: 157, 170–171), and the contents of the latter's account from his sojourn among the Berbers (Zurara-Soares: 189–192, 445–450). Following his stay, he arranged for talks between the crew of the caravel and Ahude Meymam, a local merchant, who proposed that the Portuguese purchase several black slaves. After a time, many people interested in contact with the arrivals appeared on the coast. As both sides were fearful, a couple of hostages were exchanged by both sides. It is then that several people motivated by curiosity and the desire to trade came on board the caravel. The Portuguese bought nine black slaves and a small quantity of gold sand. Local women attempted to seduce those who had come on land but the Portuguese feared a trap. The cape where all this took place was named Cabo do Resgate (the Cape of Trade) – *E àquelle lugar ficou, dali avante, por nome Cabo do Resgate* (Zurara-Soares: 197), but the name didn't survive because the location didn't become a permanent place of trade.

These exceptional and incidental encounters were not followed by further systematic contacts. They did, however, make such an impression on the Portuguese that not only Zurara wrote about them, but so did João de Barros in the following century (Barros-Cidade: 40–44). Cases of Africans boarding a caravel

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were noted by Zurara on several more occasions. Not all attempts to establish contact were successful. Moreover, the curiosity of the Portuguese led at times to outcomes that were not peaceful. Battles took place and news of Portuguese attacks spread rapidly in Africa (Zurara-Soares: 176–177). This is perhaps why Gomes Pires's attempt to reach out to the Africans near the island of Gorée, by leaving on the beach a cake, a mirror, and a piece of paper depicting a cross, failed, and when the desire for contact led to a battle (Zurara-Soares: 365–366).

During his second expedition, Ca da Mosto took advantage of the navigability of the Gambia River and sailed his caravel inland, to the seat of the local ruler – Batimansa. Having exchanged gifts and expressions of friendship, trading began and lasted for 11 days (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 97–100). In Manuscript A of Ca da Mosto's account, only two days are mentioned, which would lessen the importance of this stay. This event can be viewed as one of the earliest meetings between Europeans and Africans on the Gambia River. The analysis of this meeting is impossible, however, given the paucity of source material. In any case, Ca da Mosto felt he had been successful. It inclined him to sail further south. At the mouth of the Casamansa, he learned of a ruler of the same name who resided too far inland, however. When the caravel dropped anchor, most likely at the mouth of the Geba River, boats full of armed Africans approached, but communication with them was impossible, because none of the interpreters knew the local language. As a result, Ca da Mosto decided to return to Portugal (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 110–114).

With the exception of the last of the above contacts, none of them can truly be viewed as a meeting. They were spontaneous and sporadically organized encounters. Both sides were only beginning to learn how to behave with the potential partner or adversary. According to psychologists, a meeting can be recognized as such if the two parties acknowledge each other's subjectivity (Węgrzecki 1989, 1993: 29–36). Violence or the treatment of one party by the other as an object is inconsistent with the idea of a meeting. Therefore, the absence of aggression during the course of the initial contact is seen as auspicious for both parties and as creating favorable conditions for a future meeting.

Thus, firstly, such contacts had to be peaceful. If the Portuguese landed in order to attack the local inhabitants, plunder and seize slaves, by doing so they precluded or delayed any potential meetings. The result was similar when Africans, having been warned of the possibility of being raided, attacked the Portuguese caravels or envoys sent on land.

Secondly, the ability to communicate was essential, which is why the Portuguese came prepared with interpreters.

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Thirdly, the meeting could take place and be effective only if its parties were clearly defined.

Fourthly, both sides had to express the desire to hold a meeting based on expectations of advantages. The mere satisfaction of curiosity seems an important factor, but one that worked once, for a short time and was insufficient in the long run. A long-lasting factor was striving for bilateral trade advantages.

Fifthly, the meeting had to be prepared, both sides had to accept its circumstances, define their aims and the methods that would lead, during the meeting, to their realization.

And sixthly, the meeting required a specific length of time and a location. It couldn't be a short-term and superficial contact, during which the parties had no time to define their expectations and communicate them to each other. It had to have a definite time frame. Repeated, schematic and automatic contacts are not meetings. It was also important for the meeting to take place in a space consciously defined and used by the participants.

Thus, in this book, I will consider meetings between Europeans and Africans during the early Portuguese expeditions to West Africa, and will include peaceful contacts that took place as a result of the will of both parties; contacts from which the parties expected specific results to be achieved in common; contacts that occurred in a space and at a time defined by the parties; and contacts which were organized by both parties and which were not, therefore, accidental in nature.

Given that every meeting is a dynamic process which takes place within a closed time frame, its entire course is important. The results achieved by such a meeting are not only dependent on the presence of the conditions mentioned in the definition, but also on their intensity and duration (or cessation). The chronicles and other relations concerning early European expeditions to West Africa contain several meetings that meet our preliminary definition and are described with sufficient detail and scope to make possible an analysis of their course and outcome. In this chapter, I wish to concentrate on three such meetings. The first is the meeting between the Danish knight Valarte, acting in the name of Henry the Navigator, and the local Serer chief Guitenyia. This meeting was described in detail in Zurara's chronicle, in Diogo Gomes's recollections, and in the work by João de Barros (Zurara-Soares: 533–543; Gomes: 30–31; Barros-Cidade: 63–64). We already know the result of this encounter, and here we will look at its course. The second is the one that took place between Ca da Mosto and the ruler of Cayor, Budomel, and was described by the Venetian merchant (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 49–58). The third is that between Diogo de Azambuja and the local chief Caramansa, which took place on the Mina Coast and is described in the widest number of primary sources, above

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all in sections of Rui de Pina's chronicle, the works of Duarte Pacheco Pereira and those of João de Barros (Pina-MMA 1952: 8–14; Barros-Cidade: 77–85; Pacheco-Mauny: 120–123). All the above-mentioned works were authored by Europeans and are, therefore, one-sided. There are no African sources. However, the common trait of all those works is their authors' desire to describe the actions of the Africans and even their attempts to uncover the motives behind these actions.

Mentions and extensive descriptions of the events analyzed below can be found in many works that deal with Portuguese expansion in Africa (Małowist 1969a: 128–129, 190–193; 1976a: 147–149; Elbl 1992). The work of Paul Hair about the construction of the fort and trade post in Mina is particularly valuable (Hair 1994a). These authors do not, however, view and analyze these events in terms of a meeting, and that is the aim of this paper.

6.1 The Valarte-Guitenyia Meeting

The Danish knight Valarte went to Africa in the service of Infante Henrique in 1447 (Tymowski 2008a). His task was to establish contact with the local ruler (should he find him), arrange for his baptism and conclude an alliance with him against the Muslims. An additional aim was to establish trade ties. The Infante equipped a caravel, provided interpreters, and appointed a Portuguese captain for the sailing crew. The commander of the entire expedition was Valarte.

The Danish knight probably reached the part of the African coast that lies south of Cabo Verde, near the mouth of the Sine-Saloum River. The area was inhabited by the Serer people and was on the periphery of the local political organization called Sine. When Alvise da Ca da Mosto arrived there, eight years after Valarte, he noted:

> They have neither king nor lord of their own, but they nevertheless honour one more than another according to their birth and estate. They will not recognize any lord from among themselves (Crone 1937: 54).
>
> Non hano re né signor alguno proprio, ma ben honorano più uno cha uno altro, segondo la qualità e condition de li homini che sono fra loro; non voleno consentir signor nesun fra loro (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 75–76).

This is the situation that Valarte found among the Serer from Sine and it determined the course and outcome of the meeting. After dropping anchor, the

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knight and several people, including the interpreter, disembarked and began talks with a large group of Africans. He proposed that they exchange hostages and agree to further contacts. His interlocutors answered that they couldn't make such a decision without orders from the chief (the Portuguese texts use the term *cavaleiro*), who was the 'governor' of this country – *governador daquela terra* (Zurara-Soares: 535). When that chief, by the name of Guitenyia, learned of this proposal for talks, he arrived on the coast, agreed to the conditions suggested by Valarte, and sent his envoy onto the caravel. The envoy was read the letter from the Infante that Valarte had brought with him and was told that the Portuguese wished to establish relations with the ruler. The envoy answered that the ruler, which he called *Boor*, was in the hinterland, where he was engaged in a war expedition, and contact with him would be impossible. In fact, *Boor* was not the name of the ruler, but his title. In the language of the Wolof, and also that of the Serer, the word *boor* (*bur*) means 'ruler' or 'king' (Mota 1946: 299–304; Boulègue 1987: 15, 46–47, 129–131; Diagne 1981: 40–44). The Europeans then organized a feast on the caravel after which they sent the envoy back on land.

During these preliminary talks, two other important members of the local African community, named Satam and Minef, arrived on the coast. The latter was described by the Portuguese as unusually eccentric and terribly ugly, but as having significant influence over the other Africans. Whereas Guitenyia wished to continue the meeting with Valarte and the Portuguese, Satam and Minef were opposed to it.

The following morning, when the Portuguese boat came ashore, Guitenyia was waiting for it with couscous, a type of soup, bread, butter, milk, palm wine, flour, dates, a goat and kid, and an elephant tusk. His most probable intention was to make a gift in the form of a meal and to begin trading (as the presence of ivory could indicate). The further course of events also seems to point in this direction. Another dignitary, by the name of Amallam, came to the coast. He was the son of Guitenyia's uncle, i.e., a member of his lineage. His name could indicate contact with the Muslim marabouts, who probably had met the Serer people (Mota 1946: 301, footnote 98; Zurara-Bourdon: 260, footnote 5). Valarte's missionary aims, as set by Infante Dom Henrique, were not an obstacle. Neither at that moment nor later were religious matters raised at all. In any case, Amallam did not protest against contact with the Europeans, but attempted to take over Guitenyia's role and to direct the talks and, eventually, the trade. When a dispute arose, Guitenyia gave the Europeans the food and asked them to eat their meal at a distance while the locals debated.

The discussions among the Africans, dignitaries known to us by name and other members of the community, went on – fruitlessly – all day. In the

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meantime, Guitenyia approached the caravel in a boat on several occasions in order to swap merchandise. Although he maintained that he possessed the power transferred to him by the *Boor* and that he could act in his name, he clearly did not represent the entire local community, which had not come to a consensus, and he had not been able to force his opinion on it. In this situation, Valarte and the Portuguese repeated their request for talks with the supreme ruler, upon which Guitenyia sent an envoy to him. In the meantime, time passed as they conducted trade and feasted. The Portuguese concluded that the most valuable merchandise their partners had was ivory. They thus asked Guintenyia to bring some in greater quantities. It seemed that matters proceeded favorably, that trade was advantageous, and that ties with the supreme ruler would be established shortly.

The situation sudden reversed when Guitenyia set off hunting to obtain the ivory. Valarte came ashore with a boat, as he had many times before. He always took precautions, but this time he and his companions fell into a trap, and perished. In the circumstances, the caravel's crew decided to return to Portugal.

The meeting thus ended in catastrophe. It had been insufficiently prepared for. Although Valarte had interpreters and merchandise to trade, other conditions – primarily the place of landing – were rather accidental. The Africans were taken aback by the appearance of the Europeans and only after initial contact had been made did they consider what to do. There were certain aspects that augured a positive course of the meeting. After the caravel had dropped anchor the two sides came to a preliminary understanding. The interpreters did their job well. Both sides had merchandise in which the other side was interested and began trading to their mutual benefit. The locations for the meetings were the beach on the shore and the caravel. The description shows that the Africans came onboard the ship with greater confidence than that showed by the European who went ashore. But for both sides, the safety of the people who found themselves on the other's terrain was secured by an exchange of hostages.

The ultimate breakdown of the meeting had as its source the absence of a unified stance on the part of the African party. One could even state that, despite Valarte's expectations and efforts, there was no such party. Guitenyia attempted to play that role, but was unsuccessful. His leadership was not accepted or beyond discussion among the Africans. Other dignitaries tried to either take over his role (Amallam), or to hamper his efforts and break down relations with the arrivals (Satam and Minef). Perhaps they feared the increase of Guitenyia's importance as a partner of the Europeans. They thus took

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advantage of Guitenyia's absence, and incited the other Africans to attack the Europeans and kill those who came onto the beach. The meeting turned into a confrontation.

Zurara devoted an extensive chapter of his chronicle to these events. He described precisely and with great detail the negotiations, the African participants, and their hesitations about whether to continue or break off the talks. Perhaps the death of the foreign-born knight made a great impression at the court of Infante Henrique. In any case, Diogo Gomes and, in the 16th century, João de Barros, also wrote about the death of Valarte. The causes of the failure were probably carefully analyzed at the court of the Infante. This was, after all, the time when he strove to restrain the fighting and plundering and to establish peaceful ties. The conclusions reached from the course of Valarte's expedition were presumably the following: one should seek partners on the African side who had sufficient power to ensure the peaceful course of the discussions, i.e., a ruler who had greater authority and enjoyed greater obedience than did Guitenyia; on the Portuguese side, there was a need for people able to establish and maintain peaceful contact. This role was better suited for merchants than knights. There was also a need for better preparation of the meetings, on the part of both the Africans and Europeans.

6.2 The Ca da Mosto-Budomel Meeting

The mission that Infante Dom Henrique entrusted several years later to the Venetian Alvise da Ca da Mosto was an example of a well-prepared expedition and the best indication that the lessons from Valarte's failure had been learned.

During his first expedition, in 1455, Ca da Mosto reached the state of the Wolof people – Cayor – located to the south of the mouth of the Senegal River and to the north of Cabo Verde. This area had been known to the Portuguese for a decade at most. Contacts with the Africans had initially been of a hostile nature (Zurara-Soares: 243–254, 339–346, 483–486), but they gradually took on a more peaceful character. There was time to prepare interpreters. The Portuguese were able to get to know the ruler and his capabilities. As Ca da Mosto wrote,

> for certain Portuguese who had had dealings with him (with Budomel – MT) had informed me that he was a notable and an upright ruler, in whom one could trust, and who paid royally for what was brought to him (Crone 1937: 35).

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> io havea habuto information da altri Portogalesi che con lui havea habuto a far, che liera persona da bene e signor de chi se podea fidar, apagava realmente quello che'l tolea (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 49).

Ca da Mosto also had other information concerning the Africans: he knew what merchandise they expected and what he himself could count on buying, he knew a place called Palma di Budomel, where the caravel could drop anchor. He had an interpreter with him. In addition, he was an experienced merchant, despite his young years. Thanks to all this, he was able not only to conduct trade but also to influence the shape of future principles of exchange with the Wolof.

The course of the meeting between the Venetian and the Cayor ruler Budomel is known to us from the description of the expedition that Ca da Mosto wrote down following his return from Portugal to Venice in 1463. It is thus a first-hand account. The text is based on the author's recollections and, presumably, on notes made during the trip itself. It is the work of a keen observer who was curious about the world and wished to get to know and understand his African partners and uncover the motives behind their actions (Laurent du Tertre 1985: 28–31; Mollat 1984: 56; Hair 1994b: 98–100).

Having dropped anchor, Ca da Mosto sent an interpreter on shore with news of his arrival and of the merchandise he had to offer. The message was directed to the ruler, whom he called Budomel. We know that this was his title and not his name. In the Wolof language, *bur* means ruler, while *damel* was a title given to the ruler of Cayor, one of four states established by the Wolof (Boulègue 1987: 15). In response to this news, Budomel arrived on the coast assisted by about 15 men on horseback and 150 on foot. He sent an envoy to Ca da Mosto with an invitation to come ashore and assurances that he would welcome his guest with all honors. The Venetian agreed to this proposal without fear. Not only did he land on shore personally, but he immediately brought with him the objects destined to be sold, such as horses and other goods, a gesture that was indicative of his full confidence in the ruler. It is a great pity that a description of the guest's reception has not come down to us. Ca da Mosto noted only that he was greeted cordially, that he and Budomel had lengthy conversations, after which he gave Budomel the horses and other goods. The welcoming and talks took place on the shore, at the place where both parties came into contact. Budomel promised to pay for the goods he had received with slaves, but said he needed time to gather them. Therefore, he invited Ca da Mosto to his seat located in the hinterland, at a distance of about 25 miles (i.e., about 37 kilometres) from the coast (Ca da Mosto used Roman miles which are equivalent to 1,480 metres per mile). Counting on beneficial exchanges, Budomel gave the

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Venetian a present in the form of a very beautiful 12- or 13-year-old slave girl. Ca da Mosto sent her to the caravel. He, in turn, trusted Budomel and decided to travel deeper inland.

We do not know how long these first meetings lasted. We do read, however, that Budomel, having received news of the Portuguese arrival, came to the coast immediately (*brevemente*). If he had been nearby, the entire preliminary stage of the meeting would have lasted one day. If, however, he had 37 kilometres to travel, the discussions could have lasted an evening and the following day. In any case, this was a relatively short period of time. In contrast, the later part of the meeting and Ca da Mosto's stay in Budomel's residence inland lasted about 28 days (*e li stete zircha zorni 28*), according to the Venetian.

During the initial stage of the meeting, after the envoys had presented the intentions of both parties, after the invitation to come ashore, preliminary trade discussions took place. The course of this stage seems to indicate that both parties came to it somewhat differently or could offer different possibilities. Ca da Mosto was a merchant who was acting primarily in his own interest. Even though he had obtained the authorization for the voyage and a commission from Henry the Navigator concerning the development of trade, he was not Henry's official representative. If he wanted to show himself in the best possible light, it would be by demonstrating his abilities as a merchant. It is most probably for this reason that, as he came ashore, he immediately took goods with him, especially horses, which were highly sought after in Africa. Budomel on the other hand, showed himself to be a ruler. He didn't take with him the goods that he would barter, i.e. slaves.

From the later part of Ca da Mosto's narrative, we know that Budomel's entire entourage numbered several hundred people in various parts of the state:

> This Budomel always has at least two hundred negroes with him, who constantly follow him, though it is true that some are always coming and others going (Crone 1937: 38).

> Questo Bodumel ha sempre 200 Negri in chassa per el meno, che continuamente el seguita e vano con lui; ben è vero che l'un va e l'altro vien (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 54).

It would thus seem that Budomel came to meet Ca da Mosto with the entire suite that surrounded him at that time. He most clearly wished to show himself in the full splendor of his power. As Ca da Mosto mentioned, it was precisely the size of the entourage that reflected the importance of Wolof rulers (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 52). Budomel arrived on horseback, as did about 15 of

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his people. This was also a symbol of the ruler's importance and that of his closest dignitaries. In West Africa, horses were very expensive and were a mark of prestige, also among the Wolof. They were brought through the Sahara from North Africa, and were regarded with reverence, expressed in ceremony and incantations (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 69; Law 1980). Budomel signaled by this gesture what his political position was and what his possibilities were as a trade partner. This was well understood by Ca da Mosto.

The ruler of Cayor made yet another gesture, the equivalent of which the European omitted to make at the beginning of the meeting. During the first discussion, he gave the Venetian merchant a present in the form of a beautiful slave. In West African culture, such a gesture was an expected, if not essential element of the successful beginning of any negotiation. We know nothing of a reciprocal present from Ca da Mosto. Most certainly he did not know local customs sufficiently well. By making such a present, Budomel gained a psychological advantage as the more dignified person. Ca da Mosto confirmed this by writing of the African ruler's eminence and authority (*stado e continentia*) (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 55–56).

As we have seen, an important aspect of the meeting was the subjective treatment accorded by one party to the other. The course of Ca da Mosto's stay in Budomel's state, the bond between them and the substance of their discussions all clearly testify to the fulfillment of this important condition. Both individuals were interested in the other and wished to find out as much as possible about each other and, at the same time, they did not violate the other's dignity.

In order to demonstrate European customs, at the end of the meeting the Venetian organized a feast for Budomel and his closest circle, which elicited much admiration and commentary from the Africans. This feast could be recognized as a gift, albeit belated, from the European visitor.

Ca da Mosto talked not only of trade, although trade was the principal motive for the meeting. The Venetian was also interested in the political organization of the Wolof, their agricultural production, the role of the wives of the ruler in their system, Budomel's court, the procedure of holding audience, markets, customs, beliefs, and entertainment (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 52–60, 67–70).

Although we are relying only on a description drawn up by a European, we can still find out much about the Africans. Ca da Mosto observed Budomel, he wondered about his attitude and described the psychological motives guiding his behavior. We thus find out that Budomel wished for the meeting to produce other benefits besides trade. He wanted to understand his visitors and learn from their abilities. This concerned many different areas. For example, on

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seeing the Europeans' manifold abilities (if not their behavior in Africa), Budomel asked Ca da Mosto if the latter could show him a method to satisfy many women. This was of considerable importance for Budomel as he had at least several dozen wives, and the political and economic system of Cayor was based on the ruler's numerous marriages (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 53–54).

The most important discussions between Ca da Mosto and Budomel had to do with religion. One of the Infante Henrique's principal aims was to convert pagans. But only slaves captured or purchased in Africa were usually converted (Zurara-Soares: 97–98, 169, 339–343, 528; Tymowski 2003). Ca da Mosto described the first part of the discussions, which took place in Africa in a situation that precluded violence, with the goodwill, interest, and freedom to express various opinions on both sides. Budomel was the active party, and even the initiator, of these discussions.

The influence of Islam reached Cayor as well as the other Wolof states. Muslim marabouts were present there and a mosque operated within Budomel's residence (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 56–57; Boulègue 1987: 95–99). The ruler allowed the Venetian to enter the mosque and observe the prayers. This was an expression of kindness and an incitement to discuss religious matters. According to Ca da Mosto,

> as he [Budomel – M.T.] was very anxious to hear the articles of our faith recited, he frequently asked me if I would consent to repeat some of them for him (Crone 1937: 40–41).
>
> e perché l'avea grande apiaser de aldir recitar de la cosse de la nostra fede, el me dissea che li dissese de la mia fede alguna cossa (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 57).

When Ca da Mosto presented Christianity as a true and holy religion this angered the marabouts from Budomel's entourage no end. The latter did not give in to their protests, however, but listened and indicated that he wished to find out as much as possible. He then stated that as God had given Christians much riches and knowledge, his law must be just. He decided to remain with his Muslim faith, however, the more so as he concluded from Ca da Mosto's teachings, that since rich Christians have paradise on earth, Africans, who had so little, would enjoy paradise in the hereafter, 'for God was a just Lord' – *perché Idio era iusto signor*. Ca da Mosto was full of admiration for Budomel's 'good powers of reasoning and deep understanding of men' – *e in queste simili cose monstrava de bone rason bon intendimento de homo* (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 57; Crone 1937: 40–41). He thought that the eagerness with which Budomel listened

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to his teachings gave good prospects for his future conversion. Just as in the case of trade, the discussions about religion were evidence that the partners treated each other in a subjective manner and constituted a point of departure for future, more systematic contact.

6.3 The Azambuja-Caramansa Meeting

The meeting between Diogo de Azambuja with the local chief Caramansa took place in 1482 on the Gold Coast, written in the contemporary sources as *mina de ouro*, *mina do ouro*, *mina doiro* and *Minne d'Or* (Mota 1950: 274 et seq.; 1972: 218). Paul Hair also gives an overview of its earliest mentions (Hair 1994a: 43–44, footnote 3). The Portuguese reached this area in 1471 and it rapidly became a place for profitable trade. The name had to do with the principal good offered by the Africans there – gold. This made it an area of unique importance for the Portuguese. The local inhabitants were organized into a segmentary system of villages ruled by chiefs and village elders. Trade with the Europeans was supported by the chiefs as it raised their prestige and reinforced their power. Between 1471 and 1482, both sides got to know one another's capabilities and expectations and strove to ensure a conflict-free exchange of goods. As usual, the Portuguese took care to train interpreters. Trade was conducted either on the caravels anchored at a certain distance from shore, or on land, which the Europeans reached by boat. In this area, the main trade center was a locality called by the Portuguese Aldeia das Duas Partes. The trade center of Shama, located to the west, competed with it (Delafosse-Escudier: 26, *Aldee duos partz* and *Chama*). Portuguese trade in Mina at this early period is corroborated by a document from 5 August 1481 (PMA: vol. 1, no 130). Marian Małowist and Paul Hair, among other scholars, also wrote about it (Małowist 1969a: 441 et seq.; Hair 1994a: 48–49, footnote 18).

The Portuguese decided to change the way trade was done in Mina. The reason for this was perhaps the consequence of Portugal's war with Castile in 1475–1479, during which Castilian and Flemish merchants tried to break Portugal's monopoly on trade with Africa. Eustache Delafosse's expedition is a testimony to Flemish attempts to do so. Castilian documents concerning those attempts were published in *Portugaliae Monumenta Africana* (PMA: vol. 1, no. 105, 17 February 1479, no. 107, 16 May 1479, no. 109, 17 May 1479, no. 110, 22 July 1479). The Castilian chronicles also contain some additional information. I mention the passages of text that describe the conflict about trade on the Mina Coast on the basis of the chronicles of Palencia and Pulgar, after Paul

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Hair and his translation of these texts into English (Pulgar 1943; Palencia 1904–1909 – reprint in two volumes 1973, 1975; Hair 1994a: 113–125). Caravel patrols sent out to catch transgressors were apparently inadequate, and King João II decided – in 1481, at the beginning of his reign – to build a castle to defend Portugal's rights in the area. As commander (captain) of the expedition, he appointed the experienced soldier and diplomat Diogo de Azambuja. The caravel commanders included numerous outstanding sailors. Specialists in finance and interpreters also took part in the voyage. According to the chronicles, Azambuja commanded 600 people, including 500 armed men and 100 craftsmen. These people sailed on 10 caravels while the building materials were carried on two transport ships called *urcas*.

The fleet arrived on the Gold Coast and, on 19 January, dropped anchor near the familiar large village of Aldeia das Duas Partes. The events connected with the construction of the castle, including the meeting and negotiations between Azambuja and Caramansa, were extensively described in the chronicle of King João II by Rui de Pina and in the work of João de Barros, *Decadas de Asia*, analyzed in detail by Hair (Hair 1994a).

Rui de Pina (1440–1523) wrote in about 1500, i.e., almost 20 years after the castle in Mina was built (Pina-MMA 1952: 8–14; Hair 1994b: 104–106). He was a contemporary of those events. As royal chronicler, he had access to documents, including Diogo de Azambuja's written report. He was thus excellently informed. His description is credible, even though it presents, of course, the Portuguese point of view. Luckily, the interpreters who had taken part in the voyage and who provided details of it upon their return to Portugal were an additional source of in-depth information.

João de Barros (1496–1572) wrote the first of his *Decadas* in the 1530s and 1540s (Barros-Cidade: 77–85; Hair 1994b: 104). The first volume of the *Decadas* was published in 1552. Barros based his description of the construction of the fort in Mina on Rui de Pina's chronicle, but he complemented it with his own experiences in Africa and perhaps with other documents and information. He was writing at a chronological distance from the events concerned and he extended the description of the negotiations to include the conversion of Africans to Christianity, an issue not touched upon by Pina. We can have no certainty if Barros's account reflects the real exchanges that took place around baptism or an *ex post* attempt to legitimate the actions of the Portuguese. Paul Hair conducted a detailed comparison of the accounts of Pina and Barros (Hair 1994a: 5–9).

We can test the credibility of the two main descriptions on the basis of other primary sources – above all, that of Eustache Delafosse, as far as settlement,

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local place names, customs, and trade are concerned; also Duarte Pacheco's work concerning the general assessment of the castle's construction, negotiations between Azambuja and Caramansa, and the tensions these created (Pacheco-Mauny: 120–123). Unlike these sources, the passage in Garcia de Resende's chronicle is entirely based on the work of Rui de Pina and doesn't contain much new information (Resende 1973: cap. 25; Resende-MMA 1952: 15–17; Hair 1994a: 108–110). In addition, we have a few documents concerning the earliest period of trade on the Mina Coast. Thus, the source material is abundant. Even though it is unilaterally European, it reveals the actions and the motives of the Africans.

After the caravels dropped anchor, Diogo de Azambuja sent on land the merchant João Bernaldez, whose caravel he had encountered in the Gulf of Guinea and whom he had included in the expedition. Bernaldez had traded on the Mina Coast previously, and he knew the village chief Caramansa as well as the local situation (PMA: vol. 1, no. 130, 5 August 1481). On this occasion, he was to inform the chief that the representative of the king of Portugal had come to ask for a meeting on the following day.

Thus this chief was to represent the Africans during the negotiations. Caramansa was already known to the Europeans. He is named in the account of Eustache Delafosse, who traded in Aldeia das Duas Partes in December 1479 and January 1480 (Delafosse-Escudier: 26). The Portuguese had very aptly chosen their African interlocutor and their choice certainly followed a good discernment of the situation. Rui de Pina defined Caramansa as the 'lord of the locality' and 'king' – *senhor do lugar, que se dezia Caramansa, a que os negros chamavam Rey* (Pina-MMA 1952: 10). João de Barros wrote of him as 'lord of the locality' and 'lord of the village' – *senhor daquele lugar* and *senhor daquela aldea* (Barros-Cidade: 77–78). Both authors refer to him thereafter as 'king' on many occasions. By using this title, perhaps the chroniclers were merely transposing European political structure onto that of the Africans. Above all, however, they raised the rank of the interlocutor in order to raise that of the negotiations.

Two years earlier, Delafosse had written that on the Mina Coast a guarantee of security had been provided him by the 'Mansa and Caramansa, who are the king and vice-roy' – *manse et caremanse, quy sont le roy et vice-roy* (Delafosse-Escudier: 26). *Mansa* is the title of the ruler among the Mande people, who live in the West African hinterland (Konare 1981: 141–147). From there, during the course of the 15th century, the Mande moved toward the West African coast where, in the region of Gambia, Cacheu and Casamansa, this title was noted by the Europeans (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 109–111; Gomes 1959: 31, 41, 43, 49). This term is not known among the Akan who live on the Gold Coast, however, and

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it is difficult to explain Delafosse's use of it. On the other hand, *Caremanse*, as *Caramansa*, is borne out repeatedly in several sources.

The Europeans had earlier come into contact with the title *Mansa* when they sailed further inland on the Gambia and Cacheu and encountered chiefdoms (*kafu*) of the Mande people there. It remains debatable whether, influenced by their knowledge of this title, the Portuguese deformed the name (title) of *Caramansa*. There is a belief noted much later (in the 18th century) that it concerned the Akan name Kwamin Ansa (Henige 1973: 223–236; 1974: 499–520; Hair 1994a: 55–56, footnote 37). There can be no certainty, however. In any case, in 1482 the local inhabitants were represented by Caramansa during the discussions with Azambuja. His power was recognized by the local Africans and he could make decisions without referring to any superior.

This power was limited, however – in relation to both territory and people – to the above-mentioned village of Aldeia das Duas Partes. Nothing seems to indicate that, at the time of the negotiations, there was one political organization that exerted power over this and other villages in the area. Granted, it was a segmentary system of independent villages. We know of a second one: Shama.

In response to the information sent by de Azambuja, Caramansa expressed joy and a desire to meet. The following day (20 January 1482), Azambuja landed on the shore accompanied by a large retinue and escort. The Portuguese commander was dressed in silk and brocade, and his principal ornament was a precious necklace (see fig. 2). The Portuguese company marched in parade formation. Mass was said at the foot of a large tree, after which the Portuguese ate a meal and stood in line to greet Caramansa. Azambuja sat on a platform built for the occasion and richly decorated with various cloths. Next to him sat the senior caravel commanders and other persons of his suite. Surrounding them were drummers and trumpeters.

Caramansa also paraded to the meeting in a manner aimed at impressing the Portuguese with his station and power. When he marched with his suite and armed retinue, bells, horns, trumpets, and drums resounded. Next to the ruler walked the village elders, and around them, warriors armed with spears, bows, and shields. Each of the dignitaries was accompanied by a young servant who carried seats of wood, like chairs (*assentos de paao como cadeiras*), which constituted a throne in the local culture. The warriors and servants were naked, with sashes covering their intimate places. On the other hand, the dignitaries wore cloth purchased from the Portuguese. This was, no doubt, the influence of a decade of trade, which had led to changing customs. Against this background, Caramansa's attire, in keeping with local culture and without any foreign borrowings, seems highly significant. Caramansa was naked except for

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a sash. But his shoulders, legs and back were covered by numerous adornments – chains and pendants – of gold. Little bells as well as golden nuggets had been woven into his hair and beard (one of the local insignia of power). Their weight kept Caramansa's hair straight. All the Africans carried weapons. The warriors' heads were covered with a sort of helmet or covering made of monkey skin decorated with animal fangs.

Caramansa walked slowly to emphasize his importance and didn't look aside. When he approached the platform, Diogo de Azambuja came down from it to greet Caramansa. They extended their hands, after which the African ceremoniously snapped his fingers and spoke the words of greeting: *Bere, bere* i.e., peace, peace. Both the gesture and the words are mentioned earlier by Delafosse, thus authenticating the claims of Pina and Barros.

After the two leaders had greeted each other, the African dignitaries (*principaaes*) approached Azambuja. Their gestures differed from that of their ruler. They wet their fingerswith their saliva, tapped their chests with them and then touched the fingers of Azambuja. According to Pina, this was a gesture of exceptional courtesy. Such a greeting reflects the Africans' positive attitude toward the Portuguese and their desire for a good relationship.

After the welcoming ceremony, a sign for silence was made and the captain began his speech, conveyed to the Africans by the interpreter. He explained the cause for his arrival – the instructions of the king of Portugal to build in this area 'a building, a strong building' (*casa* and *casa forte* in the Portuguese text) in which the goods would be kept for the safety and benefit of both parties and to build a number of additional buildings (*aposentos*), where important people could live. This would ensure peace and friendship. He turned to the Africans with a request for a location and their agreement for the construction, and even their assistance, in building the *casa*. He assured the Africans that the Christians would always offer them protection, benefits, and advantages – *receberiam emparo, proveito e favor* (Pina-MMA 1952: 12). The text of Barros is very similar to that of Pina, but it included yet another piece of information – that trade with the Portuguese would give Caramansa more power and advantage over his neighbors. In addition, Azambuja's proposals to build a *casa forte* were preceded, according to Barros, by a long incitement of Caramansa to convert to Christianity. Another difference between the two descriptions is that, in Pina's work, Azambuja addresses the Africans, whereas in Barros's work he speaks to Caramansa. Likewise, in the later portion of Pina's chronicle, Caramansa responded in his own name and that of the elders who were present during the meeting, whereas in Barros's description he replies in his own name as the sole representative of the village community.

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Taking into account the political system that existed in Aldeia das Duas Partes, we accept Pina's version as the more reliable in this respect. On the other hand, both Pina and Barros confirm Caramansa's distinctness from other members of the community. This is reflected in the chief's ceremonial attire and his gestures of welcome which were different from those of the elders.

Barros precedes his narrative of Caramansa's replies with an interesting observation that concerns the chief's behavior and mentality. In his view, although Caramansa was a barbarous man (*homem bárbaro*), yet he was:

> both by nature and as a result of the intercourse he had with the crews of the ships that came to the trading place and he possessed a clear judgment in respect of things (Hair 1994a: 24).

> assi per sua natureza como pela comunicação que tinha com a gente dos navios que vinham ao resgate, era de bom intedimento e tinha o juízo claro (Barros-Cidade: 82).

Caramansa not only listened eagerly when the interpreter summarized the speech but also watched all the gestures that Diogo de Azambuja made. Both he and his suite listened in complete silence. When the speech was concluded, like a man who wished to reflect on what he had heard and consider the reply he must make, he fixed his eyes on the ground for a short space of time and then responded (Barros-Cidade: 82; Hair 1994a: 24, 106).

Hair wondered whether Caramansa had fully understood the aims of the Portuguese (Hair 1994a: 22). After all, the proposed *casa* was to be a fort (or a castle) – both terms appear in the literature (Lawrence 1963; Dantzig 1980), and Portuguese sources from the time refer to *castello* and *fortaleza* interchangeably (Barros-Cidade: 78, see also figs. 20–21). In the language of the Akan and in their material culture there was neither a word to describe a castle nor any imaginary depiction of such a structure. The interpreters most probably used the term 'house' (*casa*), a form that found its way into both works (even though both authors earlier wrote of building a *castello* or a *fortaleza*). Irrespective of the words used, Caramansa reacted in a manner that indicated a perfect understanding of the situation, great perspicacity and a correct prediction of the consequences of the decision taken during the negotiations.

The chief began by stating that the Christians who had come to his village until then 'had been few, dirty and base' – *pouca, çuja e vil* (Pina-MMA 1952: 12), or were 'men poorly dressed and in tatters' – *homens rotos e mal roupados* (Barros-Cidade: 82). They had been happy with anything that was given them

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in exchange for their goods. Considering Azambuja's attire and appearance, he must be someone else, a very important dignitary, most certainly the Portuguese king's brother.

According to Pina's description, Azambuja immediately denied this, whereas according to Barros, he did so only after Caramansa finished speaking. If Pina was right, the captain, most assuredly unconsciously, had slighted the African ruler. In African culture, interrupting someone during official meetings was considered impolite. As we know from later sources, however, Africans looked at the behavior of Europeans with a certain indulgence even after a hundred years of mutual contacts (Marees-Dantzig, Jones: 20). Harvey Feinberg wrote of this with respect to the 18th century (Feinberg 1989: 88).

Immediately following this exchange, Caramansa gave his acquiescence to the building of the *casa*. He added, however, that should the Portuguese fail to meet the conditions of the agreement, the Africans would be free to leave their huts and land and would remain free people. At this point, Azambuja reiterated his earlier pledges and both parties expressed satisfaction with the agreement.

Barros described the final part of the negotiations more extensively and in a more dramatic manner. According to him, Caramansa attempted to dissuade his interlocutor from building the fort. Should it be built – he argued – the Portuguese:

> would scarcely endure the poverty and simplicity of this barbarous land of Guinea (Crone 1937: 121).

> mal se poderia conformar com a pobreza e simplicidade daquela barbara terra de Guiné (Barros-Cidade: 82).

This could lead to disputes and tensions. It was thus better to give up the idea of building a fort and to trade as was done heretofore, from the ships.

This excerpt from Barros's description sounds suspect. The author most assuredly put his own words in Caramansa's mouth. Surely, the African would not have spoken of the barbarous nature of the land of Guinea. This is rather Barros's view. But the account of Caramansa's longer resistance (longer than in Pina's account) seems credible – the more so as Pacheco Pereira, who wrote in 1506–1508, corroborated this version. According to the latter:

> there was much disagreement between the blacks of this land and our people about the building of this fort, who wished to prevent the work, but it was finally finished despite them (Pacheco-Kimble 120).

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> e posto que entre os negros d'esta terra e a nosa jente ouue muita diferença sobre ho fazer d'esta fortaleza, por a nam quererem consentir, emfim a seu pesar se fez [...] (Pacheco-Mauny: 122).

Caramansa's opposition was overcome when Azambuja made an extreme-sounding declaration: that the order of the Portuguese king and loyalty to the monarch required a captain to either build the fort or lose his life. According to Barros, it was only after this declaration that Caramansa gave his assent, but warned – as in Pina's chronicle – to move the village if the agreement about peaceful relations was violated. The Africans sealed the agreement with a traditional clapping of the hands. The negotiations ended propitiously for the Portuguese.

Such an end of the meeting was pre-ordained by Portuguese military superiority over the Africans, and not by their diplomatic abilities. The Europeans were armed with swords and arquebuses. Furthermore, there were cannons on the caravels. Earlier armed clashes (in other parts of the coast) demonstrated the military power of the Portuguese, although the Africans also had a threatening weapon – poisoned arrows. The number of Azambuja's soldiers was not without significance. Caramansa mentioned that, previously, Christians had been fewer, which means that he considered Azambuja's soldiers to be numerous. The Portuguese captain commanded several hundred people, even considering the number of 600 as exaggerated. Ten caravels and two *urcas* probably carried no more than 400–450 people. We know that some of them were craftsmen and that there were a few women who had been sent as punishment (*degredadas*). Some people had to remain on the caravels. Therefore, most probably only 300–350 armed men came onto the shore. Even assuming that Aldeia das Duas Partes had 1,000–1,500 inhabitants, the number of men who bore arms would not have exceeded several hundred.

Caramansa took in the superiority of the Portuguese weapons during the negotiations. It is why he indicated forms of resistance other than a one-time clash. This was the abandonment of the village and rupture of contacts. This would have been a serious blow for the Portuguese, even if they were to seek other partners.

In any case, the threat of violence was an important aspect of the meeting described here. It was not expressed in words, but it was implied by the very proposal of the Portuguese. In truth, Barros's work mentions that the Portuguese initially hid their weapons but this seems erroneous, considering the size of the swords and arquebuses. Moreover, the obscuring of weapons that could easily be seen would have indicated deception or a lack of sincerity. The parade of Azambuja's escort was rather a demonstration of force. It is only in

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the final stage of the discussions that Azambuja expressed the implied threat in words by saying that he would perish rather than renounce building the fort. Caramansa gave in to this pressure, the more so as he was interested in further trade, whose continuation on earlier terms was now impossible.

Despite the above-mentioned threats to use force, the negotiations' other features make it possible to call the gathering a meeting. Both sides strove to maintain good relations. They both presented themselves to the other in whole ceremonial splendor. Both parties were interested in the other, observed each other attentively, and tried to draw conclusions from their observations. The Africans showed perspicacity, understanding for the real aim of the arrivals, and were aware of the consequences of building the fort. Azambuja made use of the interpreters not only to convey the substance of his speech. As is clear from the later part of the descriptions, he asked them about the motives of the Africans, whom he wished to understand in order to be more effective.

The Portuguese had prepared themselves well to build the castle and to negotiate with Caramansa, who was taken aback by the Portuguese proposal. Despite this, he conducted the negotiations with diplomatic talent and using his existing knowledge of the Portuguese.

Construction of the castle began the following day. This stage is not part of the meeting, which is the main object of our analysis, but the start of the work and events connected with it give additional information about the meeting. When the Portuguese workers began to crush the rock on the location of the future fort, they were attacked by the locals with such determination that only through the intervention of the soldiers was the attack repulsed. Azambuja tried to discover the causes of the attack through his interpreters. Two were given. Firstly, the rock that the workers had begun to crush had sacred significance. Its destruction sparked protests and the defense of this location. Secondly, the Africans had not obtained promised presents. After investigation, it turned out that Azambuja had indeed given presents but he had appointed João Bernaldez to hand them over. The latter had acted in dilatory fashion, procrastinated, and failed to turn them over to the Africans. Informed of this delay and the outbreak of fighting, Azambuja offered additional presents and ordered that they be handed over immediately (Pina-MMA 1952: 13–14; Barros-Cidade: 84–85). This calmed down the situation and construction proceeded from then on without obstacle.

6.4 Comparing the Three Meetings

The three meetings described here occurred within the relatively short period of 40 years, yet they took place at different stages of Portugal's expansion and

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presence in West Africa. The first of them was held shortly after the Portuguese arrived at the land of the Serer. In truth, Valarte had interpreters, but other elements of his meeting were not prepared for and it unfolded spontaneously. The unexpectedness of their visit, the imprecise aim of the negotiations, the absence of a single interlocutor on the side of the Africans, conflicts between local dignitaries, and Valarte's limited abilities as a negotiator, led to a violent end to the encounter and to Valarte's death.

The second meeting – between Ca da Mosto and Budomel – was successful until the end. It had been well prepared through successive contacts between the Portuguese and the Wolof of Cayor and their ruler Budomel. About 10 to 11 years lapsed between the first contact, in about 1444, and Ca da Mosto's arrival in 1455. Both sides had managed to get acquainted with the other and had common goals in at least a few areas. These included trade that was beneficial to both parties and better knowledge about each other obtained by means of discussions and observations of behavior. During the 1455 meeting, the diplomatic abilities of both the Venetian and Budomel played an important role. As far as the intent to convert is concerned, Ca da Mosto showed moderation and was satisfied with Budomel's serious interest in matters of the Christian faith.

Only to some extent can the third meeting, that of Azambuja with Caramansa, be viewed as having had a positive result. Some of its circumstances were similar to the Ca da Mosto-Budomel negotiations: the third meeting was preceded by 11 years of contact; both parties were clearly identified; the Portuguese came well prepared for it; the Africans also had much information about the Europeans; and both sides wished to engage in profitable trade. The Africans were taken aback by the Portuguese proposal to build a castle, however.

The most important difference in the third meeting was the use of a threat by the Portuguese. During the first and second meetings, the military advantage had lain with the Africans. In the first case, the Africans had resorted to force and put an end to the discussions and trade through violence. In the second case, Ca da Mosto had been entirely dependent on Budomel's good or ill will. However, at no time did Budomel refer to his relative advantage but seemed determined to maintain good relations. During the third meeting, the two sides had ceremoniously demonstrated their military power but without using it. But in the final stage of the negotiations the Portuguese made an indirect threat to use force Although this did not happen, the very possibility influenced the outcome of the negotiations. After the meeting, at the beginning of the construction of the fort, a spontaneous outbreak of violence did take place. However, neither of the parties was interested in armed conflict and the fighting was interrupted. Azambuja defused the conflict by supplying additional gifts.

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Each meeting was immediately preceded by sending an envoy with information about the desire to meet. This envoy was usually sent by the Europeans, as the arrivals. They most often sent an interpreter or, as did Azambuja, a person familiar with the local customs. The interpreters who served the Portuguese were slaves who had been taken to Portugal, taught Portuguese and brought back to Africa. The Africans did not have their own interpreters in the 15th century. These appeared during the following century and were primarily *lançados* and mulattos who were familiar with both cultures.

If the African side accepted the proposal to meet, the day (usually the following day) and location for the meeting was arranged. The place for it was the shore. The Europeans, having dropped anchor, arrived on shore by boat while the Africans left their villages (residences) and came to the beach to greet the arrivals. The meeting place was thus neutral, even though it was easier for the Africans to reach and closer to their base.

This microspace, the organization of participants, and the specific placing of the leaders, their suite and escort, were described only in the narrative of the third meeting. It can be assumed that, in the case of Valarte and Guitenyia, space and its organization were limited and the meeting took shape spontaneously. Discussions were held on the beach itself, near the village, and on board the caravel. Envoys were sent by both sides, but the number of participants in the discussions was subject to change. During pauses in the discussions, villagers gathered for the purpose of working out a common position.

In the second and third cases, the Africans did not board the caravels. The entirety of the meetings took place on land. As the entourages were numerous, from the 150 people who accompanied Budomel, to several hundred people present during the meeting between Azambuja and Caramansa, the space for it had to be adapted to such numbers. The retinues and escorts were positioned in such a way that they created a boundary which framed the meeting place, so to speak.

Both parties arrived in a ceremonial manner. Wearing their best attire, with decorations and weapons, the leaders came with insignia of power and were accompanied by the sound of many instruments. We know nothing about the cries and chants of the escorts. Ca da Mosto presented himself in the role of merchant. In any case, he had no other powers.

The central point of the microspace was the seating place of the two principal figures. We know this from the description of the third meeting, during which Azambuja sat on a raised platform while Caramansa sat on a ceremonial stool, the main insignia of rulers and chiefs in this part of Africa. Both men were near one another, they could observe one another and could thus draw

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conclusions from the behavior and gestures of their partner. The interpreters most certainly stood aside, between them.

The costume of the participants, the insignia and adornments, as well as the weapons of the escort signaled their social and political position (see figs. 2, 4, 6, 9). Ca da Mosto differed from the other Portuguese participants in that he wore the clothes of a rich merchant. Budomel and the other Wolof dignitaries and merchants wore cotton attire produced locally. The cultivation of cotton, weaving and the production of cotton clothing was well established by then in the savanna area of West Africa (Monteil 1926: 585–684; Mauny 1961: 245–246, 343–345). Local rulers, dignitaries and merchants wore long robes called *bubus*, while the general population often went about naked, save for the sashes. In 1455, the Wolof did not yet wear garments made of cloth brought by the Portuguese.

The most interesting attire was worn by Caramansa, who came to the meeting in the traditional dress of a local chief, i.e., he was naked, with a sash, just as the ordinary warriors were, but covered with gold ornaments. By this attire, in keeping with traditional ceremony, he signaled his political position. This is why he did not put on robes made of European cloth, as did the elders who accompanied him.

We have information about Azambuja's parade dress, but we know nothing about what the caravel commanders or the ordinary members of the escort wore. We know, however, that Caramansa expressed admiration for the appearance of his interlocutor. We can imagine what he looked like on the basis of period works of art that depict Portuguese dignitaries: firstly, that of the portrait of Afonso de Albuquerque in standing position, painted in Portugal at the beginning of the 16th century (reproduced in Bassani, Fagg 1988: 162); secondly, the sculpture of the Portuguese dignitary surrounded by his suite, known from West African art from the turn of the 15th century, on a saltcellar probably made by the Sapi from the region of present-day Sierra Leone (Luschan 1919: plate 119, and fig. 2 in this book). A description of the costume worn by Diogo de Azambuja in the written accounts corresponds to those iconographic sources.

The participants were divided into several groups. There were those who were the main representatives of each side – Portuguese dignitaries, and African chiefs or rulers. If such a person with decision-making powers was absent (such as in the first meeting) the meeting was exposed to the risk of failure. There was also the group of African dignitaries and lower-rank European commanders who actively took part in certain parts of the meeting, but had little authority. For example, the village elders at Aldeia das Duas Partes

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personally greeted Azambuja but left the negotiations to Caramansa. In the case of the Wolof, when Ca de Mosto went inland to Budomel's residence, he was attended by the ruler's nephew, Bisboror, acting on instruction. The most numerous group were the armed escorts of the leaders on both sides. They were passive and took no part in the discussions or decisions, but expressed their support with customary gestures.

The first contact between the leaders was accompanied by gestures of greeting. Each of the parties used different gestures but they were understood by the other. Intercultural communication worked efficiently at this level, although some gestures caused surprise. The interpreters could play a role in clarifying certain gestures, but their obvious and primary role was to translate speech. The symbolic and verbal dimensions were connected; they permeated and complemented each other, and served to present the parties to one another, to express their social and political position as well as their intentions. The speeches were of a welcoming nature at first and later concerned the negotiations. The latter were primarily devoted to trade issues, then to political ones, i.e., the form that the European presence on the Africans' land would take, and, lastly, to religious matters. The initiative in the first issue lay with both sides, and in the second and third ones, with the Europeans, with the exception of Budomel, who was interested in religious matters.

An important element of the meetings, one that expressed the predisposition of one side toward the other, was the giving of gifts. Africans had more extensive and established customs in this area than the Europeans. They offered presents during the first part of the meeting, after the greeting. They were a reflection of the Africans' good intentions and respect for the other side. Guitenyia came to talk with Valarte with presents in the form of victuals. Budomel gave Ca da Mosto a beautiful slave girl. We know nothing, however, of the presents given by Caramansa. Europeans did not know yet how to make use of presents as an instrument to facilitate a relationship with Africans. Valarte did not give presents to Guitenyia but only hosted his envoy on board the caravel. He did not attempt to win over Satam and Minef by making gifts to them. Ca da Mosto honored Budomel only with a feast and only toward the end of the discussions and trade. It was very well received, but had no influence on the outcome of the negotiations. The gifts handed by Azambuja had a unique function. He gave presents to Caramansa and the village elders only after the agreement was concluded. Thus his gifts did not facilitate the negotiations but sealed them. They were perhaps a form of recompense for the occupation of land by the Portuguese. In African culture, land belongs to ancestral spirits. The descendants of the first settlers have sacral rights with regard to the land and make use of it in the name of their ancestors. Later arrivals can only use

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the land if they make offerings to those who have sacral rights. These can be valuable gifts or merely symbolic ones, but they are necessary in order not to violate the *sacrum* (Delafosse 1912: vol. 3, 5–11; Person 1968: vol. 1, 57–58, 64–65, 67; Tymowski 1978: 338–345). Perhaps the interpreters had such a situation in mind when they were explaining to Azambuja the causes of the Africans' armed attack on the Portuguese workers crushing the rock. In any case, the presents given resolved the matter of the *sacrum* connected with the land.

The length of the meetings varied considerably. The Valarte-Guitenyia meeting ran over several, maybe a dozen, days. Ca da Mosto's preliminary talks with Budomel lasted one day, but he then stayed at Budomel's residence for 28 days. Azambuja and Caramansą met during one day. So, we can see, a meeting could take place over one day if it only concerned arrangements and common decisions. If its principal aim was trade negotiations, it lasted longer.

We have already mentioned lack of preparation and the failure to precisely define the parties to the meeting as factors that tended to disrupt the meetings. But such factors could include conflicts of interest that could be difficult to overcome, as with Satam and Minef's refusal to have any contact with Valarte. Using the example of presents, one can see that ignorance of the other party's culture and a lack of understanding for its customs could be a serious cause of failure and disturbances during the meetings. For example, Valarte failed to appreciate the position of the opponents to the trade talks or the role of Minef, who was most probably a priest. He noted his strange appearance and his influence on people, but he did not comprehend the basis of this influence. Similarly, Azambuja most probably saw presents as a form of payment for the right to occupy land for the Mina castle, but didn't appreciate their symbolic role, and didn't understand their sacral role.

Curiosity and the desire to understand the other, as well as some degree of empathy making possible a more effective communication between people of different cultures, are the opposite of ignorance, lack of understanding, and disinclination to get to know the other side. Ca da Mosto, who was sincere and appreciated cultural differences, was the most inquisitive observer of the Africans. This is borne out by the diversity of his observations, his attempts to understand the motives that guided Budomel and, especially, in his delicate approach to the question of Christianity. Budomel and Caramansa showed considerable inquisitiveness and perspicacity, as did Guitenyia to some degree. On the other hand, the other Serer dignitaries did not favor contact and did not wish to meet the arrivals.

The course of the three meetings presented here reflects an evolution in the attitudes of both parties. During the first meeting, the Serer, following many disputes and discussions between various dignitaries and an assembly of men

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of the village community, refused to continue the meeting, and killed Valarte. In this context it is important to remember that the arrivals presented to the Serer a new and unexpected situation. There was no period of preparation, not only of the organizational aspect of the meeting but also a psychological one that would have led to small gestures that would have built confidence and the desire to collaborate.

The situation was different with the Wolof and the Akan. In their case, the period of developing contacts that led to the meetings described here lasted over 10 years. The attitudes of the Wolof evolved from the rejection of contact to acceptance and to their active participation in the meeting with the aim of co-shaping future and systematic relations. We do not know the initial reactions of the Akan, but we know that trade with them had been established relatively quickly before the meeting described here. We find out most about the rulers and chiefs of chiefdoms and villages, who participated in the initiation and furthering of contacts with Europeans. We can observe the merchants when trade was under way (Delafosse-Escudier: 26). The entire village community as an active party appears only in the case of Valarte's visit to the Serer. In the other instances, people of this social position played a passive role.

The Africans' decision to either reject or accept and develop contacts with the Europeans was influenced by their image of the Europeans. The arrivals initially evoked surprise, curiosity and fright among the Africans. Their subsequent assaults led to fear and the desire to fight or flee. The fear of Europeans could also lead to unfavorable conditions for trade with them. When the Serer were asked by Ca da Mosto's interpreters why they refused contact with the Europeans, they accused the latter of cannibalism. As both sides got used to each other's image and presence, such fears diminished. The Wolof admired the caravels and many other goods produced by the Europeans. But some objects – like the crossbow and cannons – evoked unceasing fright. Africans admired the general wealth and abilities of the arrivals. But if the Europeans reached out greedily for the expected benefits without moderation and decency, they were regarded with irony – as expressed by Caramansa. The sight and behavior of Azambuja and his companions were different, which Caramansa noticed and appreciated.

The image of Africans in the eyes of Europeans also changed. Initial instances of plunder were short-sighted. But even then the Portuguese appreciated the qualities of the population they attacked. On many occasions Zurara mentioned discoverers' accounts of the physical beauty of the Africans. He wrote of their abilities as warriors and their courage, as well as about the heroism of the women (Zurara-Soares: 244–245, 342–346, 413–414, 495–496). When the Portuguese decided to trade with the Africans instead of attacking them and taking

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plunder, the need arose to get to know them better and meet to decide on the terms for contact.

We can view the meeting between Ca da Mosto and Budomel as the fullest manifestation of an attitude that is open, without prejudice, full of good will and having as its aim, in addition to trade benefits, to get to know and understand the other side. This attitude marked the behavior of both the Venetian and the ruler of Cayor. Budomel expressed this openness by admiring the abilities of the Europeans and by wishing to learn from them. Ca da Mosto, similarly, spoke of his full trust in Budomel and his wish to get to know the organization, customs, and economy of the Wolof. In writing about Budomel, he admired his gravity and stateliness, his rationality, and ability to reason. It is a compilation of very positive traits – the only negative one was sexual promiscuity.

A comparison of Pina's and Barros's descriptions of the Azambuja-Caramansa meeting reflects the changing attitudes of the Portuguese. Pina depicted Caramansa without prejudice and with recognition for his position as ruler. We can see also that Azambuja treated Caramansa with respect even though he could not derail his plan. There is a different tone in Barros's assessments, although the negotiations were presented in similar fashion. Barros did in truth write about Caramansa's 'good understanding by nature,' but in some measure saw its source as resulting from the African ruler's contacts with the Portuguese – an intelligence acquired from the Europeans. These observations betray a sense of superiority. This is even clearer in statements that Barros places in Caramansa's mouth, such as the 'poverty and simplicity of this barbarous land of Guinea,' and 'barbarous man.' In addition, Barros gave vent to irony in a passage devoted to the attire of the African warriors:

> all these their devices to demonstrate their ferocity of warriors being so unseemly that they moved one rather to laughter than to fear (Hair 1994a: 20).
>
> todos tam disformes com suas invenções por monstrar ferocidade de homens de guerra, que mais moviam a riso que a temor (Barros-Cidade: 79).

Such formulations, expressing the view that African culture was inferior, or even ridiculing the Africans, are absent in earlier accounts. They also do not appear in Pina's description of the building of the fort at Mina. If any European superiority was mentioned earlier, it was the military might of the Portuguese and the view that Africans were pagans who should be converted to Christianity. With Barros, this sense of superiority concerns the barbarism and poverty

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of the people, their country, and their customs. These opinions reflect a change in the approach of the Portuguese toward the Africans. Just when did it arise?

Barros wrote the first of his *Decadas* in the 1530s and 1540s, two generations after the events connected with the building of the fort in Mina. The overwhelming majority of his description is credible – when it is based on Pina's chronicle and on contemporary documents about the events. In these passages, Barros's text reflects the mentality of the discoverers and conquerors who built the fort at Mina. But one can also assume that when Barros wrote of his own observations from Mina, his discussions with functionaries and military persons there, and his familiarity with the location and additional documentation, and the fort's construction, he was expressing the opinions of his own generation. Events connected with early European expansion in Africa were seen by his contemporaries as important and still under way. But assessments of the Africans themselves were subject to change and a degree of stereotyping. This shift occurred between the emergence of the fort in Mina and the 1530s. It was most certainly a process that developed over time. The negotiations between Azambuja and Caramansa conducted with the projection of Portuguese superiority and with an implied threat was perhaps the beginning of this process.

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CHAPTER 7

Places of Trade

According to Zurara, the five reasons that gave rise to the earliest expeditions to Africa included the desire to establish trade relations in order to bring valuable goods to Portugal and gain material benefits (Zurara-Soares: 64–66). However, during the first expeditions, mercantile aims gave way before the chivalric ambitions of the expeditions' participants – the desire for conquest, glory, plunder, and honor. A telling testimony to such attitudes is provided by both Zurara's chronicle and Diogo Gomes's memoirs (Gomes 1959; Zurara-Soares: 75–76, 90, 116, 156, 175, 208, 307–308; Małowist 1964: 11–40). It turned out, however, that the brutal assault and hunting for slaves could not go on for too long. For this reason, starting in the middle of the 1440s, the Infante Dom Henrique sought to change the character of the expeditions and to begin trading with the Africans (Zurara-Soares: 193–198, 451–453, 528–530; Gomes 1959: 24–25; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 11–13; Małowist 1969a: 132–146, 270–275; Silva 1987: 196–201). After 1447, the construction of the fort of Arguim began on the Saharan stretch of the coast. This trade post was supposed to draw part of the trans-Saharan trade to this western area. It failed to become a major trade center, however (Fernandes 1938: 52–63; Monod 1983).

The crews of the caravels that sailed further south did, in fact, make attempts to establish trade with the local population, but these were sporadic and largely ineffective (Zurara-Soares: 195, 368, 508). The mercantile aim of the expeditions didn't arouse the enthusiasm of the Portuguese knights. Zurara stopped writing his chronicle in 1447, and justified his decision to do so as follows:

> [...] for after this year, the affairs of these parts were henceforth treated more by trafficking and contracts of merchants than by bravery and toil of arms. (Zurara-Beazley: 289).

> [...] de este ano por diante, sempre se trataram os feitos daquela parte mais por tratos e avenças de mercadoria, que por fortaleza nem trabalho das armas (Zurara-Soares: 551).

According to Zurara, it thus wasn't worth commemorating.

Carrying out tasks in pursuit of trade called for specialists, merchants, and not knights. Henry the Navigator thus decided to make use of the skills of

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Italians (mainly from Genoa and Venice), who had participated in Portugal's maritime expansion since the 14th century (Verlinden 1958: 467–497). The Infante Dom Henrique's intentions are made patently clear in the memoirs of Ca da Mosto, whom The Infante Dom Henrique's envoys convinced to join the expedition to Africa and who went there on at least two occasions – in 1455 and 1456 (Leitão 1961: 1–20; Hair 1994a: 98–100). The Venetian merchant left us an excellent description of trade with Budomel. In addition, he visited – more out of curiosity than in search of profit – the local market on several occasions and wrote an interesting description of it (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 67–68). Other Italian merchants were also authorized to trade in Africa, of course as part of Portugal's monopoly. In the middle of the 15th century the most notable of these was Antoniotto Usodimare (Usodimare 1971, 1993). This sailor merchant, and his letter of 12 December 1455, is also written about by Charles Verlinden, Tullia G. Leporace, and Gerald R. Crone (Verlinden 1958; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 72, 91; Crone 1937: 52).

Attempts to break or circumvent Portugal's trade monopoly had already been made in the 15th century. Delafosse's expedition was but one example of such attempts. He described his sojourn and trade on the Sierra Leone, Pepper and Gold coasts. On the last, as we have seen, he traded in a locality referred to by the Portuguese as Aldeia das Duas Partes. It was the place where, two years later, in 1482, Azambuja built the fortress of São Jorge da Mina and established a trade post. Delafosse was not the only such risk-taker. Other attempts to break the Portuguese monopoly are mentioned by Pacheco Pereira and Delafosse himself (Pacheco-Mauny: 108–109; Delafosse-Escudier: 20).

Delafosse's description contains a stirring tale about how the Portuguese crew that had taken him prisoner went about securing food. When the merchant observed that there was a unique abundance of food on board – rice, goat's milk butter, and honey – he was told that these came from a market located on the Pepper Coast. The Portuguese had attacked this market in retaliation for the Africans' alleged ill intentions, robbed it, and carried the food onto the caravel. They had also plundered the huts of the locality where the market was located (Delafosse-Escudier: 32–34). The difference between the behavior of knights and conquerors and that of merchants was especially visible in this instance.

•••

During the second half of the 15th century, the places for all the future organized trade between Europeans and Africans in West Africa were identified. These included trade on the caravels; on the beach (where Europeans came on

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land); at already existing local markets; and at trading posts guarded by forts (Arguim, São Jorge da Mina).

The economic aspects of the beginnings of trade between the Portuguese and the Africans have been well researched and described (Brulez 1968; Godinho 1969; Małowist 1969a; Boulègue 1988). In addition, Philip Curtin and George E. Brooks examined the macrospace of trade at the level of the entire West Coast region and its hinterland as well as on an inter-regional scale (Curtin 1975: 59–100, 271 et seq.; Brooks 1993: 49–57). Ivor Wilks, Jack Goody, Bronisław Nowak, and B. Marie Perinbam wrote about the role of Dioula merchants in long-distance trade between areas on the Niger River and the territories of the Akan (Wilks 1961, 1962; Goody 1964; Nowak 1974; Perinbam 1980). The present chapter, however, will focus on the microspace of trade, an aspect which has attracted less interest to date, even in studies of West African markets. As far as the microspace is concerned, we know most about the forts and trade posts. Both of the above-mentioned trading posts have been the subject of monographs (Monod 1983 – Arguim; Hair 1994a; Ballong-Wen-Mewuda 1993 – Mina; see also Lawrence 1963, and Dantzig 1980). Trade on the caravels and on other ships existed for many subsequent centuries, but its role was an auxiliary one.

For this reason, I wish to analyze the spatial organization of two places of trade: the one onshore, where the Portuguese landed, and local markets. My intention is to complement the descriptive data with iconographic material.

The first form (trade on the shore) occurred when a European ship sailed along the coast in stages and dropped anchor at convenient locations; the merchants came ashore by boat and established contact with the coastal population. In 1480 the Flemish merchant Eustache Delafosse wrote that:

> [...] sailing up and down this Pepper Coast, which extends for thirty miles, we spent our time on procuring pepper grains and slaves.
>
> [...] en allant et venant parmy icelle coste de la Graine, quy dure 30 lieues, nous passames le tempz en recoeillant de ladicte graine et des esclaves (Delafosse-Escudier: 34).

These trade places on the coast, called *resgates* by the Portuguese, were written about by Małowist and Brooks, among other authors (Małowist 1969a: 271 *et seq.*; Brooks 1993: 197 *et seq.*). The effectiveness of shore trade depended on choosing wisely where to drop anchor. Various factors affected such a choice: geographical conditions; information obtained earlier about potential African

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trade partners; their desire or refusal to trade or establish contacts; and the goods they had.

In 1455, Ca da Mosto established contact with the ruler of Cayor, Budomel, about whom he had heard from the Portuguese. The Venetian merchant met him on the shore and even travelled inland to his seat. During such meetings, various experiences concerning different locations and trade partners were recorded. The work of Duarte Pacheco Pereira, *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* (written in about 1506–8), was a type of guide – also of a geographical and sailing nature – for people traveling to West Africa (Pacheco-Mauny; Hair 1994b: 97–99).

As he sailed for the Gold Coast, Delafosse knew one could acquire gold there and that it was not only worthwhile to take European goods, but also slaves bought from other parts of the Guinean coast. In his account, some of these coastal areas already have well-established names: the Pepper and Gold coasts, the latter named as *Minne d'Or* (Delafosse-Escudier: 22, 26, 32, 34). In this second location, Delafosse exchanged some merchandise with the inhabitants of *Aldeia das Duas Partes*. But he did the larger part of his trade with African merchants who had come from the hinterland. He had to wait until news of his arrival reached them and they arrived at the coast, which took several days (Delafosse-Escudier: 26). The expedition of a European merchant inland was out of the question on account of both the resistance of the locals and the costs of such an undertaking. Waiting on the shore was cheaper and safer. Exceptions included an invitation from a local ruler, as was given to Ca da Mosto, or the possibility of sailing inland along the navigable sections of rivers. In the latter case, the situation was similar to a caravel dropping anchor near the coast.

The second microspace of trade was the marketplace. Most of the markets that the Europeans reached had existed before their arrival in West Africa (Małowist 1967: 281–305; 1969a: 272 *et seq*., 350 *et seq*.; Karpiński 1968; Meillassoux 1971; Hopkins 1973: 51–75; Brooks 1993: 49–96). The activities of the Portuguese consisted in joining the local trade and adapting themselves to the local conditions. The first European description of a West African marketplace that we know of comes from the account of Ca da Mosto. Having completed his trade with Budomel, he set off out of curiosity to the local market, which was held relatively often:

> This was held in a field on Mondays and Fridays and I went two or three time to it. Men and women came to it from the neighboring countryside within a distance of four or five miles, for those who dwelt farther off attended other markets. … In this market I perceived quite clearly that

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> these people are exceedingly poor, judging from the wares they brought for sale. (Crone 1937: 48).

> [...] merchado [...] che se fasia in suso una prataria [...] el qual se fasea un luni o veneri [...] a questo merchado venia homini e femine del paexe circostatne a quatro over cinque milia, ché quelli che stavano piu lonzi andavano ad altri merchadi. [...] E in questi merchadi compresi molto ben che costoro sono zente poverissima a rispecto a le cose che portavano suso quel merchado a vender (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 67).

Ca da Mosto went on to enumerate those goods: cotton (cloth and yarn), vegetables, oil, millet, wooden vessels, palm mats, other objects of daily use, as well as weapons and small quantities of gold. The trade was based on barter as money was unknown. Of all those goods, the Venetian merchant was interested only in gold (he must have had victuals in abundance as Budomel's guest). It turned out that Budomel, who offered slaves and was most certainly able to obtain greater quantities of gold than the traders at the marketplace, was a better trade partner for Ca da Mosto. For the same reason, trade with local rulers and merchants coming from inland prevailed over trade at local markets, as it did in the future. But the markets could not be avoided when food was to be bought. It was also possible to change meeting places with merchants who lived further inland, from incidental locations on the coast to the more permanent site of a local market.

A description of the West African coast in the work of Valentim Fernandes (from 1506–10) reflects this latter phenomenon. The author writes that caravels could sail inland along the São Domingos River (presently the Cacheu River in Guinea-Bissau), where trade with the local ruler took place. According to Brooks, this was 'a group of villages the Portuguese collectively termed São Domingos' (Fernandes 1951: 68; Brooks 1993: 227). This was not the only trade partner of the Portuguese in the region. Along a tributary of the Cacheu, the Portuguese reached the *Banhüns* people (presently the Bagnoun, or Banyun) who, according to Fernandes, tended to trade at markets where one could obtain 'all things originating from the above-mentioned countries' – *ha nesta terra todallas cousas das terras sobreditas*, i.e., cotton, millet, rice, palm wine, chickens, cattle, goats, and other goods mentioned earlier by Ca da Mosto, as well as civets (the animals and the scent extracted from them) (Fernandes 1951: 68–70; *Códice* 1997: 93, 95; Małowist 1969a: 351–353).

The market described by Fernandes, one of several in the area, was held every eight days. It lay at a distance of seven miles from the coast, and reaching it

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was made possible by the navigable river. The market functioned under the authority of the local chief (*el rey da terra*). Fernandes gave his name as *Jagara.* This word, however, is not a name but a term that refers to a group of people who enjoy high social status. In other Portuguese texts, *Jagara* has been translated as *fidalgos* (Fernandes 1951: 70, 164, footnote 133). Therefore, this term does not refer to a king-ruler but to a local chief. On his orders, it was forbidden to come to the marketplace with weapons and to disrupt the peace. Two supervisors ensured order in the market. A separate place was assigned for each type of goods. Only fruit wine was sold everywhere in the market, in contrast to mead and wines of different types, which were sold from one area. According to Fernandes, the market brought together 7,000 to 8,000 people (which seems an exaggerated number). Yet this was an unusual market in that it attracted village dwellers even from distant locations. The supervisors took particular care that these foreign visitors came to no harm. The author added that the market was also a place of entertainment. Thanks to the order and safety that reigned there, people came without fear, like:

> [...] numerous highly born men and women who had nothing to sell, in order to drink wine, as this was one of the principal goods there.
>
> [...] vem a esta feyra muytos fidalgos homẽs e molheres sem terẽ q̃ venderẽ saluo pera beberẽ porq̃ hũas das principaes mercadorias q̃ nella se guasta he o vinho (Fernandes 1951: 70; Códice 1997: 94–95).

For all these reasons, the Portuguese showed exceptional interest in this market, from which they bought mainly cotton cloth and civets. Their trade there became so profitable that some European merchants settled near the market permanently (*e aqui estam christaõs mercadores estantes*) (Fernandes 1951: 68).

Fernandes's description is borne out by a source from 1526, the log of the ship *Santiago*. The log includes not only the voyage's itinerary, but also the type of goods bought and a list of presents (*dadivas*) given to the chiefs of São Domingos, Buguendo and other districts and villages, the *jagarafes* and the chief of the port. There is also information about the *lançados,* who were already quite active in trade there (Mota 1969: 542, 546–548, 572–575; Brooks 1993: 227–229).

Ca da Mosto and Fernandes have left us with exceedingly detailed descriptions of West African markets. They pointed to various aspects of the markets' function, such as their area of economic and cultural influence, size, the goods that were traded there, the ways they were run, and even their non-economic

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functions. In addition, Fernandes made a few observations about the spatial arrangement of the marketplace.

The sources above concern the states of the Wolof and areas that lay on the Cacheu (São Domingos) River. Eustache Delafosse's account, on the other hand, covers trade on the Pepper and Mina (Gold) coasts. These regions are distant from one another and are inhabited by numerous different peoples. This raises the problem of the comparability of the methods and organization of European-African trade in those regions. The available source material indicates that on the specific sections of the West African coast that I am interested in, the spatial organization of African-European trade was similar. It is possible to indicate several reasons for such similarities. This was due to the existence of markets before the arrival of the Europeans, and to the similarity between various African structures of social and political organization, such as a segmentary system of villages, chiefdoms and, on some parts of the coast, early states (Mauny 1961; Tymowski 2009).

Given the widespread familiarity in West Africa of trade practices, including local trade, African societies reacted favorably to the Europeans' offer of trade and proposed their own trade offerings. It is possible, however, that such similarities were influenced by the transmission of information and behavioral patterns between various areas of Africa that were quite distant from one another. This included the circulation of information about the arrival of the European newcomers (already confirmed in the middle of the 15th century), and the appearance of the Mande merchants in different parts of the Upper Guinean Coast and on the Gold Coast (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 85, Crone 1937: 60; Wilks 1962: 337–341; 1982: 333–349; 463–472). In their trading in the 15th century and in the early 16th century, the Portuguese, and the Italians who were also active in various parts of the coast, followed similar practices, based on their shared knowledge of goods, prices in different areas, the ability to calculate costs, estimate profits, etc. The prudence in contact shown by both sides led to the emergence of areas of coastal trade, which were treated as a neutral space. The involvement of Europeans in various forms of trade in the local African marketplaces came only later.

Of course, there were differences between these regions. They mainly concerned the types of African products that predominated in trade with the Europeans. This was reflected in the names of various parts of the coast – Pepper, Gold, *etc.* There were also variations in what the Africans wished to acquire – for example, in the 15th century, Europeans brought to the Gold Coast slaves acquired from other parts of the West Coast. There were different trading methods among Africans – some knew the market, others didn't, various

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regulations were in place in the markets, different functionaries were present, etc. There were more similarities than differences, however.

•••

Iconography is an important source which complements descriptions, in this case for trade on the shore and at the marketplace alike. Two excellent drawings in terms of the information they provide are a work by Pieter de Marees (1602) and one by Olfert Dapper (1668). Even though they date from a later period than the 15th and early 16th centuries, they can be used to obtain additional information by comparison and means of the retrogression method. Dapper's illustration depicts trade on the shore, whereas de Marees's picture is of a market. We will examine them in this order, not chronologically.

Olfert Dapper's work was first published in Amsterdam (Dapper 1668). This was a scientific description of Africa, for which the author had used the available geographic, natural, travel, and historical literature. He worked for profit, which he had to share, however, with his publisher and engraver, Jacob van Meurs. Dapper's work was republished many times – once again in Dutch in 1676, and in German, Latin, English, and French translation (Hair 1974: 25–54; Jones 1989: 73–84). The drawing that I am analyzing comes from the French edition of 1686. The French translation, like some other foreign language editions, contains a number of errors and changes to the original. The engravings, however, are an exact reproduction of the original. In some foreign-language editions, including the French one, the publishers used the copperplate dies acquired from Jacob van Meurs's heirs (Dapper 1686; *Objets interdits* 1989: 93–368; Jones 1989: 75–76, footnote 20).

The drawing in question (see fig. 22) presents trade between Europeans and Africans on the West African coast. It was included in the description of the land of the Wolof (Dapper 1668: 237), where Ca da Mosto had traded with Budomel 200 years earlier. It is often reproduced, but usually serves only as an illustration rather than source material worthy of analysis, although the value of iconography as a distinct source of additional and often unique information has gained increasing recognition in the last few decades, especially in the field of medieval studies (Le Goff 1965; Samsonowicz 1998: 378–385). The drawing is made up of several scenes that take place on the shore. In the foreground of the first scene, a European pours alcohol, most probably strong liquor, for an African who is holding a cup. Considering the African's modest attire, he is most likely a merchant. This we can deduce on the basis of the typical dress of an African merchant depicted the work of Pieter de Marees (Marees 1602; 1605,

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plate 2, point B). He would have set off for the shore having heard about the arrival of ships. This scene presents the beginnings of trade negotiations; an offering of drink is a form of preliminary gift and, at the same time, a sampling of the merchandise's quality. To the side are two large barrels, which most probably contain alcohol and one of which serves as a makeshift table. Beside them, on the ground, lie bowls and other copper vessels, some cloth and a bundle of goods. We can identify them thanks to the enumeration on the preceding page of the typical goods that were brought to the country of the Wolof.

In the second scene, which can be seen in the background of the first, a European merchant with his head uncovered kneels before the local ruler, presumably that of one of the Wolof states. The merchant is holding a bottle in one hand and making a gesture of greeting and respect with the other. It could be that he is offering a drink as a gift to begin trade negotiations. The ruler is recognizable by the clothing that covers his entire body, as well as by the parasol held above his head by two attendants. The latter are wearing only sashes on their hips. As Anna Chabrowska demonstrated in her analysis of the role of attire and nudity in this part of Africa, this attests to their lower social status. They are armed with spears, however (Chabrowska 2008).

The third scene – one which additionally suggests that the first two illustrate the beginnings of trade negotiations – shows the unloading of barrels from a boat that has come to the shore. The merchandise is being unloaded by crew members of the ships anchored at a distance from the shore.

The fourth scene seems unconnected to the first three. In it we can see herders driving cattle. Two interpretations of this scene are possible. The first is that the cattle were destined to be sold. We know that leather was exported from West Africa in the 17th century. But in my view, this was not cattle meant to be sold. Ships' crews did purchase victuals but not in such quantities. The purchase of one or two animals was possible, but not that of a herd. The same holds true for the African herders – they never sold an entire herd but only one or a few animals. In the second interpretation, the scene with the herders has a different significance and is not directly connected with trade. Perhaps it signals that the local population also engaged in other important occupations. Perhaps the illustrator wished to show this scene in opposition to the others to highlight a disconnection between the trading space and the adjacent yet distinct space of customary life, or as a means to evoke a pastoral atmosphere and to reach out beyond the main theme of the illustration. The thick vegetation in the background conveys this and relates to the Europeans' first impressions when they came to the land of the Wolof. The very first discoverers had already written of its beautiful vegetation and natural beauty (Zurara-Soares: 172; Ca da

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Mosto-Leporace: 74–75; Fernandes 1951: 22; Pacheco-Mauny: 46, 60; Gomes 1959: 27; Daveau 1969). These impressions are reflected in the name *Cabo Verde,* given to the neighboring cape in the 15th century and still used today.

The drawing under discussion shows people of various social functions and roles, and of various social statuses. Of the Africans, we can see the ruler, his suite, and a merchant. Of the Europeans, we can see the merchants and the boat crew who are working as porters. Each of the European merchants poses differently and is interacting with a different interlocutor. The one who is to trade with the ruler kneels before him, takes off his head covering, and pays homage. The one who is to trade with an African merchant is pouring him alcohol in a friendly gesture, but doesn't kneel and keeps his hat on so as not to show social distance. Both Europeans are offering their partner a gift and both are in the position of petitioners asking for trade. The giving of presents (*dadivas*) to local chiefs is borne out by the list of gifts contained in the *Santiago* log from 1526 (Mota 1969: 547, 572). The subject of gift-giving during trade between the Portuguese and the Africans is also examined by Eugenia Herbert (Herbert 1945: 421).

The gestures of the Africans demonstrate their self-assurance. The ruler, under his parasol, adopts a proud stance, and accepts the homage of the kneeling merchant. The African merchant's hands are resting on his hips and he holds his head high without bowing. The gestures of the people who surround the ruler are directed at their superior and lord. The armed guards have no contact with the European merchants. Similarly, the European boat crew is busy with its unloading tasks and has no contact with the Africans.

The question can be asked whether this picture, drawn in Europe by someone who had no first-hand knowledge of Africa, is not an idealized product of his imagination. The answer lies in recalling the purpose for which the description and the illustration were produced and in confronting the picture with the written sources that I have analyzed earlier. Dapper's aim and that of the illustration in his work was a scholarly description and an iconographic representation of Africa in keeping with the knowledge of the time. The engraver had to operate within the bounds defined by this aim without giving free rein to fantasy. The scene is a reproduction of those found in the descriptions, including Ca da Mosto's account, of which Dapper made use (he even quoted the name of Budomel). However, a picture needs to present things that a written text may leave out. Omissions in a text are considered a drawback, but not a disqualifying one. Empty space in a picture can't be left blank and needs to be filled with substance. In order to be faithful to reality one can make use of many different accounts and verbal transmissions. It is highly probable that this was the case for this and other similar illustrations in Dapper's work.

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Some elements of the illustration quite obviously do not apply to the 15th and early 16th centuries but are part of 17th-century reality. Above all, this applies to the 17th-century attire of the European merchant. In addition, the importation of alcohol from Europe and the importance of this merchandise in the trade with Africa also belongs to the 17th century. Dapper mentions this, but de Marees fails to mention alcohol among the most important goods imported to Africa in the early 17th century. Antony Hopkins's view appears to be similar (Dapper 1686: 235–236; Marees 1602: Chapter 11; Hopkins 1973: 111, 129–130). In the 15th and early 16th centuries, Africans drank alcohol – trade in palm and fruit wines as well as in honey-based beverages was well established, as is shown by Fernandes's description. It was the spread of distillation and the production of strong alcohol in Europe (something that took place during the 16th century) that changed the situation and led to the massive export of this product to Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The remaining elements of the illustration we can relate through retrogression to the second half of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th. These elements include the figures of trade partners (the African ruler and merchant, and the merchants from Europe), and the figures of people who are assisting with the trade but not participating in it (the ruler's armed escort and the European porters). The gestures and the symbols of social position of individuals conducting the trade are consistent with the account of Ca da Mosto, who wrote with great respect of Budomel's dignity and the manner in which he carried himself.

The illustration also provides information that widens our knowledge of the place where the trade took place. This area is – as we can see – quite small. It is located on the shore, beyond the African settlement and far from the European ships. It can be viewed as a liminal point that is accessible to both sides but not fully controlled by either of them. There are no structures whatsoever and no attempts have been made to define the boundaries of the trade area. Such a space implicitly allows participants within it to be free to act as they please and respond spontaneously to the other side's expectations. By the 17th century, the occupation of this space by traders had become regular and habitual. But in the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th, when the methods of trade and the spatial framework in which they took place on the coast of West Africa were only beginning to take shape, the choice of this space arose from the needs and calculations of both sides. At that time, the risk to the Europeans was greater than it was to the Africans. It is for this reason that during the first meeting the parties exchanged hostages (Zurara-Soares: 195). When the trade turned out to be advantageous to both sides and therefore desirable, such caution was less necessary. Presumably the presence of guards near the African

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ruler reflects his prestige and is not an expression of fear or prudence on his part. The shore, an area that was common and did not fully belong to either party, proved to be a convenient and lasting meeting place.

The second of the drawings that I wish to analyze (fig. 23) illustrates a market on the Gold Coast and comes from the work of the Dutchman Pieter de Marees published in Amsterdam (Marees 1602; 1605; Marees-Dantzig, Jones). The drawing relates to a different part of the coast than Upper Guinea. It can, however, in conjunction with the accounts of Ca da Mosto and Fernandes, be used as comparative material. De Marees's work – which was published in numerous editions in various European languages in addition to Dutch – is one of the best descriptions of the Gold Coast from the 16th to the 18th centuries. The French edition of 1605, published in Amsterdam under the supervision of the illustrator himself, was particularly faithful to the original. The original copperplates from the Dutch edition were used for this one as well. The illustration of the market is the fourth of 18 plates. The entire series of engravings was the subject of research summed up in an article by Regula Iselin concerning their ethno-historical value as sources (Iselin 1994). The publisher and printer of de Marees's work was Cornelis Claesz. The copperplates were ordered from an unidentified specialized engraving atelier. Perhaps they were engraved on the basis of drawings made, quite possibly, by de Marees himself (Iselin 1994: 153).

The engravings show various aspects of life on the Gold Coast: the appearance and garb of people of various social positions; the occupation and work of local inhabitants; and the local flora and fauna. Their aim is both didactic and informative. Each of the engravings is accompanied by exhaustive commentaries; letters on each block refer the viewer to the relevant clarifications. Given the great accuracy in the depiction of objects, costumes, and scenes of human activity, the absence of distinctive physical characteristics in the people shown is surprising. Differences in material culture can be seen, but not in physical attributes. The figures in the engravings were depicted in an antique style. They are shown without individual traits, as specific human types, people representing various social roles, but not as specific people. The drawing that depicts the market and which drew my attention is devoid of such shortcomings. Plate 4 in de Marees's work introduces Chapter 15, the title of which in the English edition is *About their Markets, how they hold them and what kind of trading is done there* (Marees-Dantzig, Jones: 62–65). It shows the functions of a place and of its spatial form, and not human figures, which are few and embedded in the space.

The market illustrated in plate 4 in de Marees's work took up a sizeable area and was surrounded by light structures (Ca da Mosto wrote of a similar field).

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It was located a Dutch mile (about seven kilometres) to the east of Mina. It was organized similarly to the market described by Fernandes: separate areas in which specific goods were bought and sold: millet, bananas, and other fruit, meat, poultry, palm wine, fish, wood, rice, fresh water, sugar cane, Dutch cloth, and a type of bread called *kanquies*. There was no separate place for trading in gold (more about this below).

The space of the marketplace was demarcated by structures and canopies. The reference elements that organize and divide this space are: roads outside the market that lead to the shore and to Mina, to Fetu and other localities further inland; the seat of the area's chief and authority of the market; a little granary belonging to the chief; a tree with, underneath it, women selling *kanquies*, which de Marees does not mention in the description even though it is shown in the drawing; a second tree beyond a palisade that marks the road to Mina. According to Adam Jones and Albert van Dantzig, those trees were venerated as former sites of worship (Marees-Dantzig, Jones: 62, footnote a). The marketplace also included a place for fetish worship – 'their God.'

The people shown in the drawing are mostly local sellers and buyers, men and women. There are also two armed guards keeping order in the name of the chief. Perhaps the other people walking alone and armed with spears are also guards. All other participants in the market had to leave their weapons (machetes and spears) before entering the market grounds (Marees-Dantzig, Jones: 64). We can also see two strolling Dutchmen. This is the only engraving showing Europeans of all those from the work of de Marees. The cultural identity of the person measuring out cloth is debatable. His head covering could be that of a Dutchman; on the other hand in the description of the illustration and in the text of the previous chapter there is mention of the great ability shown by Africans in measuring cloth and in converting European measures of length into local measures (Marees-Dantzig, Jones: 61, 62).

As was the case with the illustration analyzed above, some of the information, objects and people typical of the beginning of the 17th century cannot be applied to the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th. There were no Dutchmen on the Gold Coast at the time. There was also no cultivation of sugar cane, which was introduced only in the 16th century (Mauny 1953). Mina became the main economic source of this product only after it had been built (1482) and had expanded. But a lot of other information can be applied back in time. This concerns primarily the spatial formation, the arrangement of the space by types of merchandise, and the organization and maintenance of order.

The marketplace differed in a fundamental way from the space of the locations chosen for trade on the shore. The first was a precisely defined area that was used once or twice a week on an ongoing manner. The grounds were

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marked out by structures but were also delimited organizationally and legally. Order was kept there and weapons were not admitted. Besides the places set out for selling specific types of goods, the market also included places of worship. In contrast to the trading area on the shore, this area belonged to the Africans and was organized in keeping with their culture and their economic and social system. The Europeans were guests in this area. If they participated in trade in the market it was only after they had accepted its spatial and customary framework, the frequency with which people met there and other local principles.

The European goods for trade in the drawing under discussion include cloth, for which demand from the local African market was apparently strong and constant, but the image does not show several other goods of significance in European-African trade. There are no metal articles, copper vessels, or iron tools. Perhaps trade in these items took place outside the marketplace, as they were sold rather to the chiefs and other affluent people. Perhaps, as goods from abroad, they had no permanent trading place in the market. The absence of gold is explained in a part of the chapter adjacent to the illustration. Under the influence of the Portuguese, during the 16th century, gold ceased to be traded in the market near Mina. As it was in constant demand, it became a measure of worth, a form of currency. Barter trade continued, but it also became possible to pay with small lumps of gold called *kacraws*, from the word *kakra,* which means 'little' in the Akan language (Marees-Dantzig, Jones: 65 and footnote 5).

De Marees did not inform his readers of the entertainment function of the market – about which Fernandes had written earlier in connection with another market – but he mentioned palm wine as one of the main goods traded there. It was more important in the local economy than European alcohol, which was still absent from the market. De Marees's market also had religious functions. One could ask why such information is missing in the earlier accounts. Ca da Mosto may not have noticed these functions, but Fernandes was particularly interested in local cults and beliefs. He described them immediately after describing the market, but did not place them in the market (Fernandes 1951: 60, 70, 74). This may be due to the fact that he depended on information from Portuguese merchants, who presumably had not provided him with this in this case.

The information that can be drawn from the analysis of both images allows for a better understanding of descriptions provided by 15th- and early 16th-century written sources. Given their nature, most of the details they provide are related to the spatial organization of trade and to the relationship between spatial control and types of African-European trade. Existing literature often assimilates the two places of trade mentioned here – coastal trade was

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identified or shown as being very similar to trade in the marketplace. This may have been the case from an economic viewpoint, something which has dominated research until recently. But in terms of social and spatial organization for trade between Europeans and Africans, they were not the same. Each of them was created and used differently, and was perceived differently by the two sides.

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CHAPTER 8

Embassies of African Rulers to Portugal

Let's deal with those Africans who traveled to Portugal at their own free will and as free people. There were not many of them, and such journeys were unique. Yet these voyages played a large part in the shaping of attitudes of both sides and on the course of cultural contact between them.

We have mentioned earlier the brave African men who, out of sheer curiosity, boarded the caravels, and even freely decided to sail to the country of the arrivals (Zurara-Soares: 169–170, 196, 368, 434, 498, 509; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 97–100). The Portuguese did not enslave these people. They saw in them valuable interlocutors, who acted without compulsion and could provide information that was more credible than that given by interrogated slaves. For this reason, having been heard and questioned, these African adventurers were given presents and sent back to their place of origin. This cordial treatment could embolden other Africans to embark on a similar voyage. Thus the aim of both sides seems to have been the same – to gather information about each other. We know that, at the court of Infante Dom Henrique, details about Africa and the Africans were systematically collected (Russell 1995a: 5, 6, 11). In order to assess this information critically, its sources were differentiated. Accounts of explorers were gathered and analyzed; African slaves were questioned, as were free Africans, if and when they decided to travel to Portugal. Moreover, there was another category between the visit of a free African to Portugal and the irreversible shipment of a slave there. Such a case was described by Ca da Mosto when he related the expedition of Pedro de Sintra in 1460. At the estuary of the Moya River, three Africans voluntarily boarded the caravel, and one of them was seized and taken to Portugal. This individual, deprived of his liberty, was questioned, but then he was given presents and taken back to Africa. According to Ca da Mosto this was a frequent practice ordered by the king (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 125).

Knowledge of Africa and its peoples served to define the aims of subsequent expeditions and enable their better organization (Russell 2001: 116 *et seq.*, 294). Part of this information was kept secret, while some made its way into the pages of Zurara's chronicle and other texts about the early expeditions.

But what the free Africans told their fellow tribesmen after their return from Portugal, we can only imagine. We also have no certainty whether these people had strictly private motives for visiting Portugal, or whether they undertook

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such a dangerous mission because they were sent there. The visit of an elderly Berber man in exchange for allowing João Fernandes to spend some time among Saharan nomads was undoubtedly arranged by both sides (Zurara-Soares: 169–170). The old man reported on his travels to his fellow tribesmen on his return, but we have absolutely no sign in the sources of the contents of his oral communication. We know that Africans observed the arrival of the Portuguese, and attempted to understand their motives, organization, abilities, and the way their various objects functioned (such as the caravels and arms). In addition, we have testimony that knowledge about Europeans was transmitted between various African peoples (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 85; Delafosse-Escudier: 26). On the basis of general research into travel accounts and forms of contact between peoples of distant cultures, we can assume that, with great probability, understanding the opposite side and finding the appropriate terms to describe its culture gave rise to many difficulties. Bronisław Nowak, using the example of Buganda's early 20th-century embassy to England, very interestingly discussed the untranslatability of terms that existed in a given language and in the culture associated with it when describing a different civilizational reality (Nowak 1995: 16–29).

We don't know how the West Africans dealt with this problem. We know, however, that to describe African political systems, for example, the Portuguese used their own terminology, which was ill-adapted to the African situation. Words such as 'king' and 'captain' occur in the Portuguese descriptions of Benin, and the term 'vassal' was used by Ca da Mosto to describe the political hierarchy of the Wolof (Pina-MMA 1952: 52; Barros-MMA 1952: 53; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 56). Both sides most certainly encountered such difficulties, but despite numerous erroneous assessments, knowledge – and understanding, in a sense – of each other grew among Europeans and the Africans they met. Visits by free Africans to Portugal contributed to this to a greater extent than would be indicated by the sporadic nature of such visits.

In addition to trips by individual, free Africans, occasionally there were also official expeditions organized by African rulers. Sources describe such events extensively during the reign of King João II in Portugal (1481–1495). It was a time of Portugal's renewed and intense interest in Africa. Diplomatic missions were sent to Portugal by the rulers of Benin and Congo, and from the state of the Wolof a toppled ruler, referred to in the sources as Bemoi, set off for Lisbon. Congo lies outside the sphere of this book, in keeping with the reasoning laid out in the Introduction. We will, therefore, focus our attention on the two said embassies.

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8.1 The Embassy from Benin

Portuguese caravels arrived at the eastern reaches of the Bay of Guinea, a short distance from the state of Benin, in the 1470s. After the war between Portugal and Castile had ended (1479), an intensive trade in slaves began on this part of the coast, organized along the so-called Five Rivers. Of them, the Benin River gave access to the locality of Gwato (Ughton), which became a center of trade between the Portuguese and Benin. The river that flows south of it was named Slave River (Rio dos Escravos) on account of the main merchandise that was exported from this area (Ryder 1969: 125, map). These people were initially taken not to Portugal, but to the castle of São Jorge da Mina, which was established in 1482. There slaves were sold to African traders for gold. Benin became an important supplier of slaves and a significant partner in Portuguese trade in West Africa.

In 1486 João II sent a representative called João Afonso d'Aveiro to Benin. He brought back a local type of pepper to Portugal. But the most important outcome of the mission was the establishment of diplomatic contacts with Benin, whose ruler – *oba* Ozolua – organized his own embassy to Portugal in response to d'Aveiro's mission. It was headed by the chief of the locality of Gwato. He was most probably instructed to investigate the trade possibilities and political aims of Benin's new partner. D'Aveiro arranged the transport of this embassy to Portugal by caravel. In the end of the 15th century, the chronicler Rui de Pina described this undertaking as follows:

> The King of Beny sent as ambassador to the king a negro, one of his captains, from a harbouring place by the sea, which is called Ugato (Gwato), because he desired to learn more about these lands, the arrival of people from them in his country being regarded as an unusual novelty. The ambassador was a man of good speech and natural wisdom. Great feasts were held in his honour, and he was shown many of the good things of these kingdoms. He returned to his land in a ship of the king's, who at his departure made him a gift of rich clothes for himself and his wife; and through him he also sent a rich present to the king of such things as he understood he would greatly prize. Moreover, he sent holy and most catholic advisers with the praiseworthy admonitions for the faith to administer a stern rebuke about the heresies and great idolatries and fetishes, which the negroes practise in that land (Blake 1967: 78–79).
>
> E ho Rey do Beny, emuyou a elRey Negro seu Capitam dhuũ lugar de porto do mar, que se diz Vgato, com embaixada, desejoso de saber nouas

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> destas terras, cujas gentes ouueram lá por grande nouidade. Era este Embaixador homẽ de bõo repouso e natural saber; formamlhe fectas grandes festas, e mostradas muitas cousas das boas destes Regnos. E foy retornado a sua terra, em nauios delRey, que aa sua partida lhe fez mercee de vestidos ricos pera elle e sua molher. E assy emuiou per elle ao Rey, huũ rico presente de cousas que elle entendeo que muito estimaria. E asy santos e mui catolicos conselhos, com louuadas amoestações pera Fé, reprendendo muito, as heresias, e grandes ydolatrias e feitiçarias de que naquella terra os negros muito usam (Pina-MMA 1952: 52).

Not only priests were sent to Benin, but also traders. They, and the representatives of the king, were charged with establishing in Gwato a permanent trading post and to organize regular trade, but these efforts proved unsuccessful, because the local climate proved deadly for the Europeans. D'Aveiro died quickly, as did other Europeans. Samples of the Benin pepper (called *pimenta de rabo*, or 'tailed pepper') were sent to Flanders to be assessed but it turned out to be less valuable than other types of pepper, such as those from India (known since the Middle Ages and brought to the Levant by land) and one originating from other parts of the West African coast and called *malagueta*. Despite a few more attempts at trade, the Portuguese abandoned the trade post in Gwato around 1506–1507 (Barros-Cidade: 88–89; Barros-MMA 1952: 54; Ryder 1969: 33).

Efforts to baptize the ruler of Benin and his subjects also failed. In 1514–1516 the attempt was repeated, but when the ruler of Benin was refused permission to purchase firearms, he rejected the missionary proposals, as is indicated in the letter of 20 October 1516 from Duarte Pires to the king (MMA 1952: 369–370; also Blake 1967: 123–124).

Despite this, the Benin embassy, which took place in 1486, exerted an influence on Portugal's relations with that state, and also on the policy toward Portugal adopted by the rulers (*obas*) of Benin. Pina related the very solemn reception of this embassy and the efforts made to show the splendor of the Kingdom of Portugal. Numerous celebrations were organized, and presents were given to the envoys and – through their intermediary – to the *oba* of Benin. The terminology used in the account seems not to be coincidental – Pina consistently uses the term 'king' (*El Rey do Beny*); and refers to the envoy as 'captain' (*capitam dhuũ lugar de porto do mar que se diz Vgato*). Even if he didn't record the name of the envoy, he noted his good speech and natural wisdom.

In Pina's description one can sense that he tried to treat both negotiating parties equally. The celebrations and solemn welcoming of the embassy were public events and, as such, they shaped the opinion of a wider group of Portuguese inhabitants than solely the royal court of João II. Past experiences in

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trade and negotiations had shown the Portuguese that the best trade partners in Africa were its rulers. For this reason, they held great expectations for exceptionally profitable contacts with the *oba* of Benin, an undoubtedly powerful ruler. Moreover, the Portuguese expected they would persuade him to be baptized and, in consequence, that they could Christianize the inhabitants of the entire state of Benin. They were aware of the firmly rooted local beliefs, but failed to appreciate their strength and their importance for the organization, stability and legitimization of power in Benin.

João de Barros described these events quite a bit later (in the 1530s and 1540s). On many points he corroborated the information given by Rui de Pina, but the changes Barros introduced and the tone of his descriptions reflect the evolution that had taken place in the perspective of the Portuguese since the end of the 15th century. He gave pride of place to the matter of Benin Christianization. According to Barros, in 1486,

> this king of Beny also sent to solicit the King (of Portugal) to dispatch thither priests who might instruct him in the Faith (Crone 1937: 124).
>
> Rey de Benij mandou pedir a elRey, que lhe mandasse lá Sacerdotes pera o doctrinarem em Fé (Barros-Cidade: 88; Barros-MMA 1952: 53).

Barros also mentions 'the king of Benin's request' (*requerimento del Rey de Benij*). Thus, according to Barros, the initiative for the Christianization originated with the Africans and took the form of a request or a petition. The author of the *Decadas* then moved to the subject of pepper trade, and added:

> The King ordered the building of a factory in the port of Beny, called Gato, whither there were brought for sale a great number of those slaves who were bartered very profitably at the Mina (Crone 1937: 124).
>
> [...] mandou ElRey assentar feitoria em huum porto de Benij, a que chamam Gató onde se resgatavam grande numero delles (escravos), de que na Mina se fazia muito proveito (Barros-Cidade: 89; Barros-MMA 1952: 54).

As one can see, Barros ascribed both the initiative of building the trading post, and the right to pursue such ends to the king of Portugal, but did not make any allowance for the Benin ruler's rights or for the ability of the *oba* to accept or reject the Portuguese advances. He did note, however – given the obvious failure of the Christianization attempts – that:

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> the king of Benin was under the influence of his idolatries, and sought the priests rather to make himself powerful against his neighbors, with our favour than from a desire for baptism, he profited little from the ministrations of those sent thither (Crone 1937: 124–125).

> Mas como ElRey de Benij era mui subjecto a suas idolatrias, e mas pedia a os sacerdotes por se fazer poderoso contra seus vizinhos com favor nosso, que com desejo de baptismo, aproveitáram mui pouco os Ministros delle, que lhe ElRey lá mandou (Barros-Cidade: 89; Barros-MMA 1952: 54).

Barros then wrote about d'Aveiro's death in Gwato and about the poor and dangerous climate on account of which people were called back from this place. He added that trade went on there in the days of King Manuel the Fortunate and ships continued to sail between Congo, the São Tomé, Gwato, and Mina. It is only João III (1521–1557) who prohibited the shipment of slaves from Benin and their sale in Mina. He did so in order to prevent these slaves from falling back into the hands of pagans, despite the economic losses that this entailed for Portugal (Barros-Cidade: 89; Ryder 1969: 43–52, 71–72). And so, the theme that ties the beginning and end of this part of Barros's work is Christianization – apparently more important for him than trade. This religious aim was not inconsistent with the commercial one and, as the Portuguese saw it, the one could support the other.

Barros showed no interest in either the positive traits of the Benin envoy as a negotiator, or the ceremonial welcome of that mission in Portugal. Perhaps this is due to the fact that he placed Portugal's aims first. It is perhaps also possible that the passage of time played a role in this – Pina, who was a contemporary to those events, described the envoy differently than did Barros, who didn't see them and whose sensibility was not affected. The author of the *Decadas* did mention, however, a later mission from Benin, from 1540. It was headed by a man about 70 years of age who wore an ornament in the shape of a cross. This cross drew the attention of Barros who, it would seem, mentioned the mission itself only in this connection (Barros-Cidade: 90).

We have no direct information about the conclusions reached by the rulers and governing groups of Benin drew from the above-mentioned diplomatic missions. The reports of the Benin envoys undoubtedly affected the policies of that state with respect to Portugal and the Portuguese. From the course of events that followed, we can presume that Benin decided to continue trading with Portugal and turned Gwato into the main center of this trade. Permission for the Portuguese to enter the Benin hinterland, and especially the state capital, was regulated and depended on the *oba*'s authorization. The rulers of

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Benin were interested in owning firearms. For them, accepting Christianity was a means of exerting pressure on the Portuguese to sell them these weapons. The rulers of Portugal did not officially authorize the export of firearms to Africa, but the Benin sculptures of Portuguese musketeers (see figs. 3, 5) indicate that such arms were present at the court of the *obas*. For several decades in the 16th century, the *obas* used Portuguese soldiers in expeditions against external enemies, while strictly controlling their presence in Benin. They never managed, however, to obtain firearms for their own army. In their relations with Portugal, Benin's *obas* maintained complete control and sovereignty. The information the *obas* gained – including that obtained by their embassies – and the potential of the Benin state allowed them to pursue a rational and beneficial trade policy with regard to Portugal.

8.2 The Voyage to Portugal of Bumi Jeleen, Toppled Ruler of the Wolof

Two years after the Benin embassy to Portugal, the ruler of the Wolof, known in early European sources by the name of Bemoi, arrived there. His visit, which lasted from September to November 1488, made a great impression on the Portuguese, and gave rise to numerous commentaries. Information about Bemoi had been included in the chronicles by Rui de Pina, Garcia de Resende, and João de Barros (Pina-MMA 1958: 536–542; Resende-MMA 1958: 543–549; Barros-MMA 1958: 529–535, 550–567; Barros-Cidade: 48–104, 122–127). News of the visit spread throughout Europe. We know of one letter that mentions it, sent from Lisbon on 20 November 1488, from the Florentine merchant Paolo d'Olivieri to his uncle Sandro Paghangniotti based in Florence (Zafarana ed. 1968: 1109–1110). In addition, there are legends on maps of West Africa that were drawn toward the end of the 15th century, and an inscription in an armorial from the beginning of the following century, which refer to Bemoi. This ruler and his visit were still being written about at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th. The entirety of the sources concerning the voyage of Bemoi (Bumi Jeleen) – including later texts from the end of the 16th century and from the 17th – are discussed by Avelino Teixeira da Mota (Mota 1971: 63–111).

In Portuguese sources from the 15th and 16th centuries, the ruler of the Wolof is referred to as Bemoi, Bemoim, Bemus or Bemoy, and Benmui in the letter of the Florentine merchant. The image of Bumi Jeleen's coat of arms with an inscription of the day – *De Bemoim Rei de Jalofa* – is reproduced in Mota's work. The author includes a reference to the archival book in which this coat of arms was placed: *As Armas de D. João de Bemoim no livro de armaria feito por*

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Braz Pereira Brandão, S. XVI, Arquivo Dos Condes das Alcaçovas, Lisboa (Mota 1971: 90 *et seq*.). Henricus Martellus Germanus's map of West Africa (ca. 1489) carries the information *don giouãj bemu, rex cenage* (Don John Bemu, King of Senegal), while the legend on a map in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence states *don Giovanni bemus, rex cenagie elicazari* (*?*) *novus christianus 1489* (Mota 1971: 88–89, and fig. 8). In both map legends written after Bemoi's baptism, his Christian name João (John) is given as well as the core of his African name (Bemu, Bemus). Only in texts from the end of the 16th century and from the 17th is his name given as Bomuim Gilem, Bumy Gilem, or Bumugelem – in the work of André Alvares Almada (1594), an anonymous text dated 1600, and in the description by Francisco de Lemos Coelho (1684) (Mota 1971: 91, 92–93, 99–100). José da Silva Horta stressed the connection between African and Luso-African oral culture and the accounts written down by Cabo Verdeans (Horta 2000: 120 *et seq*.). He identified in the texts of Almada and Coelho (as well as in the text of André Donelha) elements of the oral tradition recorded by these authors and the information given to them by the Africans and Luso-Africans at the end of the 16th and 17th centuries (Horta 2013). Thanks to these oral African transmissions, the transcription of Bumi Jeleen's name is much more accurate in these later works than in the Portuguese 15th-century texts (Horta 2013: 35).

We can also identify this ruler with one who appears in the oral tradition of the Wolof – Dyelen Mbey Leeyti (Gaden 1912: 119–137, 191–202; Monteil 1966a: 595–636; 1966b; Ndiaye Leyti 1966: 966–1008; Mota 1971: 102–103). In the Wolof language, *bumi* signifies an heir, a successor. Thus the most probable form of the title and name of this ruler would be Bumi Dyelen or Bumi Jeleen. This latter version was adopted in the literature (Boulègue 1987: 150–154; Northrup 2009: 26–29). José Lingna Nafafé, who devoted a section in his book to Bemoi's mission, uses the spelling 'Bemoij.' Nafafé advanced the thesis that the course and the results of the negotiations may have been a manifestation of Bemoi's intention to 'westernize' his state (Nafafé 2007: 103–109).

An extensive explanation of the political situation of this ruler was provided by João de Barros. In truth, he was writing several decades after the event, but he made use of a very reliable informer, Gonçalo Coelho, who had witnessed the events in the states of the Wolof and, later, in the 1520s, was a scribe in the accounting offices of Lisbon (*escrivão da fazenda dos contos da cidade de Lisboa*) (Mota 1971: 103).

According to Coelho, and Barros after him, Bemoi was one of the successors to the throne in the most important Wolof state – Jolof (or Dyolof). The name 'Great Jolof' is also used (Boulègue 1987: *Le Grand Jolof*). In turn, Ca da Mosto

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used the term *regno de Senega* (Kingdom of Senega), in contrast to *paixe de Budomel* or *terra de Budomel* (country or land of Budomel), which he used in connection to Cayor, which was dependent on Jolof (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 41, 49). The name 'King of Senega' (*rex cenage*) is also used in the legends of the above-mentioned maps.

In the states of the Wolof, the number of pretenders to the throne was always great, as a result of the polygamous marriages of the rulers and their large number of offspring. This was mentioned as early as Ca da Mosto, who, we will recall, visited Cayor in 1455 and described the Wolof states (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 41 *et seq.*). Struggles for the throne are also described in oral traditions (transmitted by Yoro Dyao, who knew them well, to Henri Gaden, cited above). In the decades that followed, the Wolof became important trade partners for the Portuguese. Trade with Cayor, in particular, which lay on the coast, became particularly strong. But Jolof was also supposed to play an important role in the plans of the Portuguese. The Europeans counted on its mediation and friendly cooperation in penetrating the West African hinterland and in establishing relations with Mali and Timbuktu. Accounts of the riches to be found there and of the gold trade drove the Portuguese to explore these lands.

Bumi Jeleen, who took power in Jolof for a short period, was also a proponent of closer ties with Portugal. In this context, he counted on Portuguese assistance in his struggle against other pretenders to the throne of Jolof, and he presumably also wished to put a stop to Cayor's growing independence. According to Portuguese sources, Bumi Jeleen used as an intermediary Gonçalo Coelho, who in 1487 was trading in the service of João II at the estuary of the Senegal River. The ruler of Jolof established contact with Coelho and through him sent presents to the king of Portugal in the form of gold and slaves. In addition, he sent his nephew as an envoy to ask for armed assistance in the fight against his enemies. During the course of this first diplomatic mission, João II refused to help, arguing that Bumi Jeleen was not a Christian ruler. Nevertheless, as encouragement and to maintain contact, he did send him five horses (Barros-Cidade: 100; Barros-MMA 1958: 532; *Textes portugais* 1968: 832). This signaled the beginning of Portuguese pressure on Bumi Jeleen. Without Portugal's assistance, in 1488, he was beaten by his opponents and banished from Jolof. In the company of his supporters, he then traveled to the Portuguese castle and trading post of Arguim, which lay on Africa's Saharan coast, and sailed to Portugal on a caravel, to personally seek support in his struggle to regain power. According to d'Olivieri's letter, he was accompanied on this voyage by 'his son, nephew and numerous other relatives and servants, in the number of forty

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people' (*uno figliuolo e uno nipote e mmolti altri parenti e servi, di numero di quaranta persone*) (Zafarana, ed. 1968).

When the African ruler arrived in Lisbon, João II was in Setúbal. The latter already knew quite a lot about the new arrival and ordered that he be treated as well as possible, and be taken to the castle in the locality of Palmela. There, Bumi Jeleen and his retinue were given European attire and horses, so that they could appear for the audience before the king in a manner that was – from the Portuguese viewpoint – appropriate. According to Barros, the point was to greet Bemoi,

> not as a barbarian prince outside the law [Christian Law], but as someone who could be one of the European lords, familiar with our way of life and ceremonial protocol.
>
> [...] não como principe bárbaro e fora de lei, mas como podia ser um dos senhores da Europa, costumado às policias e serviços dela (Barros-Cidade: 98; Barros-MMA 1958: 529).

José Gonçalves and Paul Teyssier emphasize that *fora de lei* did not signify 'outside of all law,' but 'outside Christian law,' 'outside religion,' while *policias* can be translated, in their view, as the European 'way of life,' 'worldliness,' and even 'civilization' (*Textes portugais* 1968: 824, footnotes 1 and 2). Crone, who otherwise translated this entire passage rather imprecisely, translated the term *policias* using a similar notion to that proposed by Gonçalves and Teyssier, as 'accustomed to our civilization' (Crone 1937: 128).

On the day of the audience, D. Francisco Coutinho, Count of Marialva, arrived at the castle of Palmela in the company of knights, and accompanied Bumi Jeleen and his retinue to Setúbal. João II and the queen prepared a splendid reception for the guest. Their residence was decorated with precious fabrics and in the room allocated for the king a type of stage was installed and covered with brocade, on which a throne was placed. The king sat there, surrounded by D. Manuel (Prince of Beja, brother of the queen, and the future King Manuel) and a retinue made up of counts, bishops, and other dignitaries. In a separate room was the queen, the son of the royal couple Afonso, dignitaries, and court ladies in ceremonial attire.

When Bumi Jeleen entered the royal room, the king made two or three steps in his direction while slightly lifting his hat. Bumi Jeleen, in a gesture consistent with West African court custom, fell to the king's feet and sprinkled sand over his own head. This scene was presented by Pina and Resende (Pina-MMA

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1958: 538; Resende-MMA 1958: 545). In his Introduction, Barros mentioned the solemnity of the reception and directed the reader to Pina's work for the details, but he described the gesture further on in the chapter (Barros-Cidade: 102; Barros-MMA 1958: 534; *Textes portugais* 1968: 828). João II courteously brought Bumi Jeleen to his feet and asked for the discussions to begin. These took place through interpreters. According to the chroniclers, Bumi Jeleen was a tall man of very dark skin, with a beard. His body was proportional, his behavior majestic, his movements were marked by great elegance, and he was about 40 years old.

Both the substance and the form of the Wolof ruler's speech made a great impression on those present. Pina and Resende described this in detail whereas Barros was quite a bit more succinct. According to Pina, Bumi Jeleen 'spoke of matters with such seriousness that one would not think he was a barbarian Negro, but a Greek ruler brought up in Athens' (*nom pareciam de Negro bárbaro, mas de Principe Grego criado en Athenas*) (Pina-MMA 1958: 538). Bumi Jeleen's arguments were detailed and logical. The Wolof ruler told the king about his misfortunes with many sighs and tears. He asked João II for support and assistance in avenging the wrong done to him and to restore justice. He placed all his hopes in the hands of the king,

> since not only was he so noble, powerful, just and pious a king, but also principally he was the lord of Guinee, to whom he, as his vassal, came, seeking assistance, justice, and mercy (Blake 1967: 82).

> [...] asy por ser Rey tã nobre, a tã poderoso, tã justo, a tã piedoso: como principalmente por ser Senhor de Gujnee, cujo vasalo era, pedindolhe socorro, justiça, e piedade (Pina-MMA 1958: 538).

Bumi Jeleen then quite openly described his strategy. Having heard about the power and virtues of the king, he had wanted to meet him much earlier, but hadn't done so – a fact that was difficult to explain. It would have been better had he come for the meeting 'with all his freedom and happiness, than (as now) vanquished and banished' (*ẽ toda mjnha liure prosperidade quanto este meu destroço e desterro*) (Pina-MMA 1958: 538).

The Wolof ruler then moved to the matter of Christianization. He knew from previous contacts that this matter was of utmost importance for João II and that he, Bumi Jeleen, as a pagan, could not count on the king's aid. For this reason, he had decided that he, his retinue and all members of Wolof noble families would accept baptism from the hands of the king. According to the chronicles of Pina and Resende, Bumi Jeleen added that, if he were to accept

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baptism in the midst of the many difficulties and obstacles he was facing, it would be because circumstances determine laws, and:

> it seems that the force of his necessity rather than of his faith had caused him to do it. With these he coupled many other sound reasons touching his purpose (Blake 1967: 82–83).

> [...] porque pareceria que forças de sua necessisade, mas que de fé lho faziam fazer, e com estas disse outras mujtas e boas razões sobre sua tençã (Pina-MMA 1958: 539).

We don't know if this very pragmatic and political confession was truly made by the Wolof ruler, or whether those words were placed in his mouth by the two Portuguese chroniclers (Pina and Resende). If the former, this was presumably an attempt by Bumi Jeleen to give credibility to his political position. If the latter, it was an expression of a certain reserve on the part of the chroniclers, both of whom knew the later course of events.

The king responded to this speech with seriousness and conciseness. He expressed his pleasure on account of the visit and Bumi Jeleen's decision to accept Christianity for himself and his immediate circle. In exchange, the king promised to help Bumi Jeleen recover his throne in this world, and hope for eternal salvation in the afterlife. After the audience ended, Bumi Jeleen also visited the queen and made a shorter speech in which he asked her to support his cause with the king.

On the following day, João II spoke at length with Bumi Jeleen behind closed doors, with only interpreters present. According to the chroniclers, he asked many questions concerning African matters and received answers which satisfied his curiosity. Barros noted that the king was particularly interested in the situation in the West African hinterland, in its rulers and cities, and in the gold trade. Both Pina and Resende write of this discussion. According to the author of the *Decadas*, the discussions were repeated many times (*muytas vezes*) (Barros-MMA 1958: 550). There is no doubt that this opportunity to gather information was an unusually important reason for welcoming of the visit and for the negotiations, second only to the matter of the Bumi Jeleen's baptism. The talks about trade matters and the gathering of information took place in private, without the ceremonious framework.

Following the meeting, João II and Bumi Jaleen returned to the celebrations. On the king's instructions, bull fighting and tournaments (*festas de touros e canas*), dancing and music performances, games with buffoons, and evening balls and banquets had been organized. Bumi Jeleen took part in these

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celebrations, and was seated and appropriately raised, next to the king. During the feasts, people from the retinue of the Wolof ruler also performed a show of acrobatic horsemanship (Resende-MMA 1958: 544–545).

For all the Portuguese authors, and for the Florentine merchant and author of the above-mentioned letter, the most important event of the visit was the baptism of the African ruler and his entourage. According to Pina, João II gave orders that appropriate instruction concerning the faith be given to Bumi Jeleen. This was done by theologians and other learned men. This was necessary,

> for Bemoym was of the sect of Mafamede, in whom he believed, because of his being a neighbour of, and dealer with, the Azenegues, and he had some knowledge of the contents of the Bible (Blake 1967: 83).

> [...] porque Bemoÿ era de seita de Mafamede ẽ que cria: polla vezinhança e partecipaçã que auja co os azengues; e tynha alguũ conhecimẽto das cousas da briuia (Pina-MMA 1958: 540).

In addition to receiving instruction, Bumi Jeleen participated in a solemn Pontifical Mass on All Saints' Day, sitting in the choir of the Church of the Holy Virgin, kneeling and uncovering his head during the raising of the host. Resende confirmed Pina's account of this (Pina-MMA 1958: 540; Resende-MMA 1958: 547). On the other hand, Barros left a much shorter account and omitted the participation of Bumi Jeleen (still a pagan) in the Pontifical Mass. According to Pina and Resende, two days after this mass the king gave a ceremonial banquet, to which he came in a magnificent costume. The rooms and the tables were very richly decorated. Minstrels gave concerts and sang. The baptism took place after the banquet. Barros is probably more accurate in placing the banquet after the baptism ceremony, which was on 3 November 1488. On that day Bumi Jeleen and six dignitaries from his retinue were baptized.

The ceremony was held in the queen's apartments, suitably prepared and decorated for the occasion, late, 'at the second hour of the night of the third day of the month of November, in the chamber of the Queen' (Blake 1967: 84). *E aos tres dias do mes de nouembro* [...] *a duas oras da nocte na camara de Reynha* (Pina-MMA 1958: 540; Resende-MMA 1958: 547). In attendance were the king and queen (as god-parents), princes Manuel and Afonso, the Papal Nuncio, the Bishop of Tangier, and the bishop of Ceuta, who had celebrated the Pontifical Mass. Bumi Jeleen obtained the name João in honor of the king.

Then, on 7 November, the king knighted Bumi Jeleen and gave him a coat of arms in the shape of a golden cross on a purple background, framed in the

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arms of Portugal. At the same time, four more Wolof dignitaries were baptized. The African ruler, now as the Christian John, paid homage to the Portuguese king and pledged allegiance to him. In addition, he wrote to the Pope a letter in Latin, in which he gave news of his political fortunes, informed of his baptism, and stressed the achievements of João II in this matter. This letter was most certainly neither written nor dictated by the sender, but rather by the secretaries from the Portuguese king's chancellery. It was nevertheless accepted by Bumi Jeleen (Pina-MMA 1958: 540–541; Resende-MMA 1958: 547–548; Barros-Cidade: 102–103; Barros-MMA 1958: 550–551, 536 for the coat of arms; Mota 1971: 90 *et seq.*).

After these ceremonies, the king granted armed assistance to Bumi Jeleen. He equipped a fleet made up of 20 caravels, which he placed under the command of Pero Vaz da Cunha and sent the Wolof ruler with this fleet to his country. According to d'Olivieri's letter, there were 300 people on the ships (Zafarana ed. 1968: 1109). The supply documents indicate that the crew was made up of 320 men. Portuguese chroniclers wrote that they were well armed and that the ships were loaded with construction materials. The documents gathered by Teixeira da Mota also mention the good outfitting of the fleet (Mota 1971: 76–88).

The task entrusted to the admiral commanding the fleet was threefold. Firstly, he was to give armed assistance to Bumi Jeleen to allow him to regain power. Secondly, he was to build, at the mouth of the Senegal River, a fortress that would not be handed over to the Wolof ruler, but would remain under the rule of the king of Portugal. Thirdly, the priests and nuns who were part of the expedition were to see to the Christianization of the Wolof people.

Overseeing the priests and nuns was a Dominican, Master Álvaro, who was the royal preacher and confessor. This fact reflects the importance of the project. Some of the construction materials were to be used to erect a church. João II's plan was similar to earlier undertakings: the construction of the fortress and trading post in Arguim (about 1448) and – under the reign of João II – the fortress and trading post of Mina (in 1482). The new fortress at the mouth of the Senegal River was to become the basis for organizing Portuguese trade with the Wolof, for enabling their Christianization and – something the king placed great hopes in – for supporting Portuguese expansion into the West African hinterland in an attempt to reach Mali, Timbuktu, and perhaps 'Prester John' (Pina-MMA 1958: 541–542; Resende-MMA 1958: 548–549; Barros-Cidade: 103, 108; Barros-MMA 1958: 551–552, 559). Francisco Freire has recently researched Berber oral transmissions concerning Portuguese 15th-century attempts to penetrate the African hinterland from Arguim (Freire 2016).

Despite the good preparation of the expedition – both in material and diplomatic terms – and justified hopes for collaboration with Bumi Jeleen, João

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II's efforts ended in complete failure. The expedition failed to accomplish any of its three aims. In unclear circumstances, the commander of the flotilla, Pero Vaz da Cunha, began to suspect Bumi Jeleen of treason and killed him with a blow of the sword (or dagger) while still on the caravel, without any attempt to clarify the situation or to land and begin the work planned.

All three of the Portuguese authors claimed that Cunha wished to return to Portugal as quickly as possible. Barros added that the fleet sailed into the waters of the Senegal River, where it aroused the admiration of the Wolof. The construction of the fortress was even begun, but the commander was more fearful of the climate than of alleged treason. His irresponsible act and the catastrophic end to the royal plans caused great royal displeasure. Pina opined that had there been suspicion of treason, it would have been sufficient to seize Bumi Jeleen and bring him back to Portugal. Cunha fell into the king's disfavor – 'and so did many others' (*e a outras mujtos*), added Pina (Pina-MMA 1958: 542). Resende also wrote of João II's displeasure and about accusations leveled against Cunha, whom the king wished to punish.

> In the end, punishment fell on many innocents, who hadn't done anything wrong in this matter. [...] because, wishing to punish, the king condemned to death many innocents.
>
> [...] chegaua o castigo a muytos que nisso forã culpados [...] porque auendo de dar castigo cõpria que matasse muitos q̃ nisto forã culpados (Resende-MMA 1958: 549).

The unfortunate and unreliable commander, however, avoided punishment. The consequences of Pero Vaz da Cunha's act did not concern only the matter of Bumi Jeleen, but the entirety of Portugal's relations with the Wolof. In the end, bilateral relations were not ruptured and trade continued, but the rulers of Jolof and of the other Wolof states treated subsequent proposals for other forms of collaboration with great caution. The fortress planned by João II wasn't built and proposals for baptism were rejected. Cayor retained its leading position in trade with Portugal.

We have two documents from 1515 and 1529 that concern later diplomatic missions. In the first of these, dated 22 August 1515, King Manuel (1495–1521) instructed an official of his treasury to 'give this Negro, envoy of Godemell, Lord Biziguiche' (*Nós el Rey mamdamos a vós recebedor do noso tisouro, que dees a este negro, embaizador de Godemell, Senhor de Biziguiche*) a present in the form of precious costumes (MMA 1963: 114, no. 33; Boulègue, Pinto-Bull 1966: 663–664). Godemell was most probably Bor-damel, a term which was a

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title of the rulers of Cayor, whereas the name Biziguiche was used to denote a segment of the coast on which the city of Dakar presently lies – in the territory of Cayor. The ambassador obtained a cape, a coat, a pair of cotton trousers, a linen jacket, two shirts made of fabric brought from *breancha* (Brittany?) and a red beret – all this in order to dress appropriately (*para se vestir*). We know nothing of the further course of the events or of the results of the negotiations. We have, however, confirmation that talks were held not only in Africa but also in Portugal.

The substance of the negotiations is presented in the second document, dated 5 May 1529. It is a letter from the Bor-damel of Cayor to João III (1521–1557), king of Portugal (MMA 1963: 214–215, no. 68; Boulègue, Pinto-Bull 1966: 664–665). In it, Bor-damel sends his greetings to the king and states that seven years earlier he had written to João III's predecessor (Manuel the Fortunate), and had sent a mission to him to discuss the matter of the construction of a castle in 'Biziguiche,' in the vicinity of a navigable branch of the river (*do Ryo homde estão muytas aguadas*). In his letter, he refers to the Portuguese captains and the sailors who had supported this project. He claims that King Manuel had sent him precious gifts before he died, and had authorized him to carry out the planned construction. Presently (i.e., 1529), on the suggestion of his elders (*minha gente e vasallos*), Bor-damel had decided to return to the project. He was asking for authorization for this and made reference to his loyalty, which could be corroborated by the many Portuguese who visited his country. He was asking the king to send bricklayers and carpenters, and promised to remunerate them. He pointed out that stone and timber were available in his country, but that there was a lack of lime and sawn lumber. He recalled that he had sent to Manuel the Fortunate a gift in the form of 15 slaves, yet had not obtained what he had been expecting. He was thus renewing his plea, and sending it to the new monarch. He promised vassal loyalty and great trade benefits.

The letter of the Bor-damel of Cayor is the oldest surviving document written in the name of a Wolof ruler, most certainly drawn up by some Portuguese scribe who was at his court at the time. The letter reflects the new policy of Cayor. The Bor-damel expected, or even sought, to build the castle, even if the Portuguese monarch presumably wished to have control over it.

The two documents testify to the existence of diplomatic relations between Cayor and Portugal. Many years had passed since the tragic quest of Bumi Jeleen. Jolof failed to take on the leading role in trade with the Portuguese and Cayor maintained its advantage in this respect. The rulers of Cayor used various methods to do this. They sent envoys, they formulated projects, they sent gifts to win over the Portuguese monarchs, and they made reference to their

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vassal dependence and loyalty, but also to the opinions of the Portuguese who were active in Africa.

They took advantage of their presence to make use of the written word in their contacts with Portugal. Their efforts were thus numerous, diverse, and well thought-out and coordinated. As we see in the said letter, this strategy was conducted by the Bor-damel together with his council of elders. So not only the ruler, but a wider ruling circle, was conscious of who their European partner was, and directed their efforts not only at the Portuguese who were present in Africa, but also to Portugal itself, to its king and its other authorities.

•••

In the course of the travels of the free Africans to Portugal, in the manner in which those trips were organized, in the mutual perception of the Africans and Portuguese, and in each side's formulation of its expectations and views, one can observe the continuity of some types of behavior, and a change in others. The Portuguese monarchs supported such voyages and viewed them favorably. Above all, no expedition, whether of individual persons or official embassies sent by African rulers, or the single 15th-century visit by an African ruler (albeit toppled) could have taken place without Portuguese aid in transporting the Africans on board the caravels. This was the sole means of travel that enabled such visits and it was exclusively under Portuguese control. Such aid was granted without difficulty. Visits and embassies thus lay in Portugal's interest.

Of course, we can presume that some of the African offers to send embassies were rejected or weren't acted upon for various reasons, but the sources are silent on this point. We do find out about those voyages or missions that took place and awoke the chroniclers' interest or which occasioned correspondence or documents of a different type.

In the earliest period of the Portuguese expeditions there were free Africans who embarked on caravels out of curiosity and were willing to sail to Portugal. They did so either out of their own free will, or on the instruction of their superiors – the tribal community, chief, or ruler. These people were treated well, because they could be a precious source of information for the Portuguese. Following discussions, the visitors were given gifts and sent back to Africa.

Receiving missions from African rulers in Portugal first began under the reign of João II. The preparation for this type of contact followed a predictable course: in Africa, the Portuguese sought areas, chiefdoms, or early state organizations which seemed particularly interesting in terms of trade potential; contacts with chiefs and rulers, but also local merchants, were preferred; after trade was stabilized and trading partners became known, a royal envoy

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established contact with the local chief or ruler, if there was one on the given territory; this was followed by an exchange of gifts.

The type of gifts depended on how successful the trade was and the information gathered about what the trade partner valued. Africans gave gold and slaves. The Portuguese king most commonly gave garments made of precious fabrics. Horses were especially prized. If the Portuguese king hosted Africans in his own country, he set aside appropriate residences and gave his guests clothes and food.

The high point of the reception of a delegation or of the visit of an African ruler was the royal audience with the pronouncement of speeches. Portuguese chroniclers devoted much attention to the Africans who headed the missions. They wrote about their dignity and majesty, their dignified behavior, age, height, body proportions, elegance of gestures, and skin color. Their ability to present arguments and formulate a speech made a great impression on those present during an audience. The speeches were translated by people specially selected for this purpose.

Royal audiences were well prepared, and the room in which they took place was richly decorated with fabrics. The majesty of the Portuguese king was suitably highlighted, and his gestures indicated courtesy toward the arrivals. These audiences undoubtedly served as an occasion to negotiate with the other side as much as to emphasize Portugal's success. Present during the audience were the family of the monarch (the queen, and the heir to the throne), court dignitaries, bishops, and perhaps dignitaries from other European states, like the Papal Nuncio. Thus the circle of participants and groups who helped to convey the political message was not large but it was elite. The sources do not divulge how many people from the retinue of African envoys or of Bumi Jeleen took part in these ceremonies. We can only presume that the chief negotiators did not appear before the king alone, but surrounded by their closest collaborators and at times behind closed doors.

The official audiences were followed by public ceremonies and festivities meant for a larger number of spectators. Festivities, tournaments, and banquets were intended to dazzle the Africans and convince them of the splendor of the Kingdom of Portugal. They were also meant to instill pride among the spectators who were the subjects of King João II, in the achievements of their monarch, and the successes of his expeditions and his overseas policy. These celebrations were also meant to impress other foreigners that were present in Portugal at the time. These included dignitaries and merchants from Italian cities and from Flanders. Through them, the message about Portugal's successes would reach many other European countries and cities. The ceremonies could be serious and solemn in character, as was the case with the Holy Mass

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during which Bumi Jeleen voiced his desire to accept Christianity. Others, like the banquets, tournaments, and the performances by minstrels and orchestras, served to entertain the greatest possible number of spectators. During these celebrations, the Africans also showed off their skills.

Side by side with such events, which were important in terms of the legitimization of power and proclaiming its successes, there were also the discussions that were held in the calm of the rooms of the royal residence. The two principal subjects concerned the African rulers' possible conversion to Christianity and, as a future consequence, that of their subjects, and trade relations. These aims never stood in opposition to one another, as success in one area could further progress in the other (Russell 1995b: 161). In practise, however, in the African region of interest in this book, there were no instances of lasting Christianization, because the African rulers treated this subject as an instrument of leverage and made their agreement to baptism dependent on other benefits of a political and military nature.

One important aim, albeit a more discreet one, was to gather information about the other side. According to the sources this was the main aim of the mission sent from Benin, and most certainly was that of many other African missions. João II followed and expanded on the methods of gaining information about Africa that had been introduced by the Infante Dom Henrique. He added to them direct discussions with envoys and with Bumi Jeleen. There was little publicity around these talks, as they took place in isolation, within a small circle of people, and at times they were tête-à-tête.

João II was very interested in the West African hinterland, where he sought to establish contacts with Mali, reach Timbuktu, and use the trans-Saharan routes or change their path toward the western coast. To do this, he counted on the favor of the coastal rulers, especially of Bumi Jeleen, but he obtained nothing. He sent other missions to the 'King of Tukulers' and to 'Mandi Mansa,' the ruler of Mali, but none of them produced the expected results (Barros-Cidade: 123; see also Blake 1967: 33).

The African rulers also sought to use the Portuguese to further their own aims. Firstly, they sought to develop trade and, in many cases, to bypass or eliminate their African political competitors. Bumi Jeleen's efforts for Jolof to take over Cayor's leading role in the Portuguese trade were characteristic in this respect. These efforts proved unsuccessful given the murder of the Jolof ruler, and Cayor retained its primacy.

Trade with the Portuguese held advantages for the rulers and ruling circles of African states or chiefdoms in the shape of greater affluence and prestige. African merchants also benefited, and certain imported goods enabled a real increase in power in addition to prestige. Among these were horses, which the Portuguese sold without legal limitation. The Portuguese prohibited the sale of

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weapons in Africa – both cold-steel weapons and firearms. These the rulers of Benin had repeatedly sought to acquire, but without success.

A separate issue is the use by African rulers of Portuguese units armed with muskets. Bumi Jeleen's efforts to regain power through the help of a Portuguese armed expedition ended in catastrophe on account of the irresponsibility of the Portuguese fleet's commander. João II's plan to build a castle at the estuary of the Senegal River meant that, in the future, Portuguese armed forces in the area would act independently of the Wolof ruler's will. The plan fell through, but one can nevertheless doubt whether Bumi Jeleen and his successors would have been able to make use of those soldiers. Benin's situation was different. Its rulers employed Portuguese units armed with muskets and crossbows in their expeditions against their neighbors, but this took place without official Portuguese willingness to sell firearms to Benin's rulers. With its own large and valiant army, the state of Benin was powerful enough to control the activities of the Portuguese units and make sure they didn't threaten the independent power of the *obas*.

Documents confirm that Benin tried to access firearms as early as the beginning of the 16th century. But the extensive use in Benin of Portuguese musketeers took place in the later decades of the 16th century and in the 17th century. This is reflected in the written sources, and in the Benin sculptures, which portray musketeers, crossbowmen, and even cannons (Pitt-Rivers 1900: plate 1, ill. 4 – The Portuguese in the service of the Benin army; plate 14, ill. 84, 85 – a musketeer; plate 32, ill. 247 – A Portuguese with a linstock; plate 46, ill. 361 – A Portuguese with an arquebus or other early firearm; Luschan 1919: plate 1 – crossbowman; plate 2 – a musketeer; plate 4 – Portuguese with linstocks; Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: ill. 10, 11 – Portuguese with linstocks; ill. 231, 232 – musketeers; ill. 233 – crossbowman; see also figs. 3–7 in this book).

Cultural practises were displayed during the diplomatic negotiations, leading to mutual familiarization and defining the principles and the scope of collaboration, as described above. In the source material collected one can see information about the use and reception of writing. The events connected with this were still of marginal significance and were incidental, not systemic. They nevertheless represented at least the beginnings of an understanding of the role that writing played in the organization of contact with the Portuguese. This concerns the Wolof, who had had contacts with the world of Islam for centuries. Those contacts were relatively tenuous, but the marabouts who practised in Jolof and Cayor brought with them if not a knowledge of writing, then at least an understanding of its function. As we know, Bumi Jeleen sent a letter to the Pope written in Latin. The idea of issuing such a document, written up by João II's secretaries, was most likely suggested by the king himself. Bumi Jeleen's letter in reality served to proclaim João II's feat. But we can

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presume that the Wolof ruler at least understood the point of sending this letter.

In any case, the letter sent from Cayor in 1529 in the name of the Bor-damel and the elders of that state testifies to the progress that had been made in this respect: the use of writing was not alien to that ruler. Its role was understood in Cayor, even if some Portuguese from the Bor-damel's court most probably wrote it.

Many aspects of the diplomatic contacts between Portugal and the African states were repetitive in nature. In the organization of missions, the conducting of negotiations, and the arranging of ceremonies and feasts, certain protocols were followed. There were also changing aspects, which depended on the outcome of the negotiations, but to an even greater degree on familiarization with the other side and changes in the two sides' understanding. The first we can study as far as the Portuguese are concerned; to find evidence of changes in the perspective of the Africans is far more difficult.

In his article devoted to Bumi Jeleen's visit to Portugal, Peter E. Russell focused on what the Portuguese saw as the African rulers' limited sovereignty (Russell 1995b). This didn't apply solely to pagan rulers, but also to those who had been baptized. Attempts were made to convert the former, and their rule and independence were respected as an element of Africa's political reality, which the Portuguese could not alter.

But Bumi Jeleen, who had been banished from his own state, was asking for assistance out of necessity. João II had refused to help him earlier, when he was a pagan. However, once he had been baptized, made a knight and pledged fealty to the kings of Portugal, the Wolof ruler gained (at least in theory) the same rights as those of all European vassals. As a fully entitled ruler who recognized the suzerainty of João II 'the Lord of Guinea,' he was owed assistance and protection from the king of Portugal.

Despite those theoretical entitlements, Russell strongly argued, Bumi Jeleen's murderer, Cunha, was not punished even though, by law, he was guilty of regicide. What's more, by his deed he had ruined all the king's plans connected with the baptism of the Wolof ruler and the possibilities of expansion in this part of Africa. We know that this murder caused great displeasure in João II. Cunha managed to avoid the consequences of his actions, however, and he was freed, even though he was facing the penalty of death. Instead, other, lesser commanders of the flotilla were executed. Russell presumes that this was due to pressure on the king from courtiers and the knighthood. These groups were dismissive of the parity of the rights and sovereignty of African rulers. Also, the execution of Pero Vaz da Cunha could have given rise to serious protests. The king had to take seriously the views of those who sought

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impunity for Bumi Jeleen's murderer. Russell's conclusion on this point is fully supported by the sources and the course of events.

The supporters and friends of Pero Vaz da Cunha wished to save him for political reasons, and out of blood, group, or family solidarity. Russell's further conclusions – which go much farther and point to racial prejudice, which supposedly proved stronger than faith, legal principles and *raison d'état* – are debatable. The division into 'theirs and ours,' the distinction between 'us and them,' undoubtedly existed since the earliest Portuguese expeditions. The issue is whether baptism could overcome or at least reduce this distance. In support of his thesis justifying the causes of the murderer's impunity, Russell cites other written sources concerning racial prejudice, but these date from a later period: the letter of Afonso I, ruler of Congo, written in 1514, comes from the time of the reign of Manuel I; the letter of the ambassador of Congo in Portugal was written in 1515; and the letter of João III, which mentions the reprehensible and bad treatment of black *cavaleiros, vasalos nostros* by the captain of São Tomé Island, was written in 1523.

I think that the way the Portuguese treated black Africans changed greatly between 1488 and 1514 or 1515, and even more by 1523. Documents from the second and third decade of the 16th century are not a good source for the study of the mentality and prejudices that existed 30–40 years earlier, because these evolved. Proof of this can be seen by comparing three descriptions of Bumi Jeleen's visit to Portugal. There are telling differences between Pina's description and the text written under Pina's influence by Resende (both from the 15th century), and João de Barros' work written some 40–50 years later. Presumably the three authors were expressing not only their own views, but also those of their own social milieu, above all that of the royal court and the knighthood and, in the wider sense, also that of the Church and of the merchants engaged in trade with Africa.

Pina and Resende wrote about João II and his African policy in an admiring tone. At the same time, they admired the king's guests on their mission to Portugal. They pointed to the dignity of the Africans, their physical and intellectual qualities, their skill in negotiation, and their thought-out argumentation. We recall that Pina compared Bumi Jeleen not to a black barbarian, but to a Greek ruler. Of course, one can see this description as both the expression of recognition of the African ruler's position, and testimony of the view that other Africans are barbarians. But whether it was the manifestation of racial prejudice is debatable. It was not race, but refinement, abilities and way of behaving that were decisive in the Portuguese chronicler's assessment. Moreover, Pina's appraisal should be seen in the context of a long sequence of opinions in Portuguese texts that run from the first half of the 15th century to the times of

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João de Barros. In the earliest of these, the opinion about the barbarism, and even the bestiality, of African peoples was common and was expressed emphatically, but on account of their way of life, the type of nourishment, nakedness, or paganism (Horta 1991a: 242–243, 250–251, 254–258, 316–324). But as the Portuguese reached African states in the middle of the 15th century, became familiar with local forms of organization, established trade relations with local rulers and merchants, such views either changed or, most often, became differentiated. Neither the organizations nor the trading abilities that the Portuguese discovered were called barbarian. This term was rather associated with paganism. It is in this context that Pina judged Bumi Jeleen, and he was not being contradictory when he praised the African ruler's many talents.

João de Barros understood the concept of barbarism in a wider sense. In a passage quoted earlier he used telling expressions: in his opinion, barbarian rulers were 'out of the law' (*fora lei*), which presumably meant out of Christian law. This was concordant with the understanding of barbarism in Pina's time. But Barros then added a new term, in accordance with which there existed a *policias,* which can be understood as a 'way of behavior,' 'refinement,' or a 'way of life' that was 'ours,' i.e., European, and which Crone, followed by the authors of the French translation, chose to call 'civilization.' Barros added yet another, third trait that set European rulers apart from barbarian ones – knowledge of appropriate ceremonies. He was writing with reference to a specific situation, the welcoming of Bumi Jeleen to the court of João II. To Barros and others from his entourage, familiarity or lack thereof with the above-mentioned *policias* seemed to be crucial. In my opinion, the Europeans' sense of superiority with respect to the African way of life grew more pronounced from the 1530s on. This trend can be associated with the gradual stereotypization of views about Africans; the growing sense of estrangement brought about by the massive slave trade; and with the failure of the attempts to Christianize the rulers and states of West Africa – an outcome that was still very much hoped for in the last quarter of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th.

The reception in Portugal of missions from African rulers had, as we have seen, two principal aims – the growth of trade and the Christianization of individual peoples. As attempts to include the latter in the *Communitas Christiana* had failed, the estrangement of the Portuguese enabled, in due course, the emergence of a growing sense of superiority. I would rather associate this phenomenon with the first decades of the 16th century, in contrast to Russell, who places it as early as about 1488.

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PART 3

A Minority among the Majority

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CHAPTER 9

African Slaves in Portugal – Cultural and Psychological Aspects

Slavery in Portugal in the late Middle Ages and in modern times has been a subject of research in Portuguese historiography since the last decades of the 19th century (Carvalho 1877; Azevedo 1903; Heleno 1933; Brásio 1944; Lopes 1944). But the work of Charles Verlinden marked a significant turning point. His first volume, published in 1955, focuses on medieval slavery on the Iberian Peninsula and in France. Chapter VI is devoted to slavery in Portugal in the Age of Discovery (Verlinden 1955: 615–632). Verlinden examined the sources of slavery and the motives behind the Portuguese expeditions (such as the desire to Christianize the peoples of Africa and to make a profit); and he discussed the impact that these motives had on the phenomenon of slavery. He thoroughly analyzed the profitability of the slave trade and described the occupations in which African slaves were employed in Portugal. Slaves most often worked as domestic servants, but they also worked as artisans, and, occasionally, in agriculture. Verlinden wrote about black slaves and white Moors, and he discussed the subject of Jewish slaves.

Studies of slavery undertaken after the publication of Verlinden's research have been dominated by two themes, both of which emerged from this seminal work: the economic and the social significance of slavery. Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, Vicenta Cortéz Alonso and Virginia Rau analyzed the economic aspects of slavery in the period of the early Portuguese expeditions to Africa (Godinho 1962; Alonso 1963, 23–46; Rau 1974: 535–543). Marian Małowist and John L. Vogt researched the importance of the slave trade in the history of the island of São Tomé and the creation of sugar cane plantations there (Małowist 1969b: 9–30; Vogt 1973: 453–467). Peter E. Russell took up social issues (Russell 1995a, 1995c). The work of Alastair de C.M. Saunders is a synthesis of the social history of black slavery in Portugal from 1441 to 1555 (Saunders 1982).

Slavery and the presence of African slaves – black and white (Berbers and Arabs) – in Portugal in the 15th and 16th centuries had a significant impact on the history of the country, on many aspects of Portuguese social life, and on Portuguese customs and culture, and is the subject of interesting research. António de Almeida Mendes studies slavery in the 15th and 16th centuries, in particular, including the types of slavery, the origin of slaves, the early

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development of the transatlantic slave trade and its relationship with Mediterranean trade (Mendes 2007, 2008, 2009, 2012). Arlindo Caldeira (2017) devotes his work to black and white slaves who were living in Portugal, in a comprehensive synthesis that covers legal, institutional, economic, settlement, social, cultural, religious, and moral issues. The author discusses slavery from the time of its appearance in Portugal to the 19th century. His study combines the description of issues and phenomena with case studies of individual men and women slaves, including children, mainly from the 17th and subsequent centuries. Jorge Fonseca, in turn, described the situation of slaves in Lisbon in the 16th century (2010), focusing on demographic, social, economic, and legal aspects, and relegating cultural issues to the background. Fonseca is also the author of a history of slavery in southern Portugal (2002) and of a summary of all research on slavery in Portugal (2014).

Research on slavery in the fields of culture and literature has focused primarily on the image of black people in Portuguese art of the late Middle Ages and modern times. Jean Devisse and Michel Mollat expanded the scope of this research to cover the whole of European art (Devisse, Mollat 1979a, 1979b). But another topic has been explored, by linguists and experts in literature, namely the simplified form of the Portuguese language as used by slaves. This was the so-called *fala de Guiné, fala dos pretos*, or *fala dos negros* – the speech of Guinea, or the speech of blacks (Teyssier 1959). The most comprehensive discussion of cultural influences related to slavery is the work by José Ramos Tinhorão (1st ed., 1988; I used the 2018 edition). It concerns black slaves only and covers the period up to the 19th century. It is devoted to problems of law and administration, the economic role of slavery, and social transformation. But the most fascinating parts of Tinhorão's work concern the image of slavery in literature, theatre, printed ephemera (often, satirical pamphlets), the influence of slavery on the Portuguese language, the creation of (in the author's words) a *língua de Negro*, songs and lyrics, and types of music (Tinhorão 2018: 203–440). As this work is a synthesis, the material that deals with modern times and the 19th century naturally prevails over that from the 15th century.

The study of black slavery in Europe was revived at the turn of the 20th century, heralded by the extensive article by Anthony John R. Russell-Wood, which was in part devoted to slaves in Portugal (Russell-Wood 2013: 270–281; 1st ed. 1994). Also of particular importance are the synthetic work of Alessandro Stella, which covered slavery on the Iberian Peninsula from the 16th to the 19th centuries, as well as a collection of articles edited by Tom F. Earle and Kathy J. Lowe, which focused on black slaves in Europe during the Renaissance (Stella 2000; Earle, Lowe, eds. 2005). In all these works, one can detect a shift in research interests from economic to cultural issues. In Stella's work, most of the

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material focuses on Spanish society. However, the Earle and Lowe collection cited above is dominated by the description and analysis of slavery in southern Europe, Spain, Italy, and southern Germany. Chapters devoted to Portugal cover slaves in the court of Lisbon, the brotherhood of Nossa Senhora do Rosario in Lisbon (and the social assimilation of slaves), black slaves in the south of Portugal, and the literary work and life of the mulatto Afonso Alvares. The chapter on European stereotypes of black slaves is particularly important for scholars who are approaching the topic from the perspective of cultural contact. In another study, by Didier Lahon, the subject of religious confraternities of black slaves in Portugal, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries, is described and analyzed in detail (Lahon 1999, 2001).

My aim in this chapter is to analyze the psychological aspects of the African slave trade and the results of cultural contact that ensued from the presence of African slaves in Portugal (Tymowski 2013). I have chosen a relatively short time period, from the early 1440s to the first years of the 16th century. The start date has been used in many works, and it seems obvious; after all, it was in 1441 that the first slaves captured in Africa were transported to Portugal. But the end date is debatable.

The question arises whether my adoption in this book of the beginning of the 16th century as the closing period for my research is also justified in connection with the study of slavery in Portugal. Verlinden (1955) ends his work on slavery at the end of the Middle Ages and doesn't go beyond the year 1500. This approach fails to take into consideration the continuity of Portuguese social and cultural history of the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th. Saunders in turn (1982) adopted the year 1555 as his end date. He justified this by the appearance that year of the first publication in Portugal to criticize the cruelty of the slave trade and the treatment of slaves in Portugal (Saunders 1982: xi–xii). Certainly, this was the beginning of a long process of changing attitudes about slavery, but it seems doubtful that that date, and that event, represented a threshold. In any case, in his work, Saunders often discusses events that came two or three decades later. In contrast, the collective work edited by Earle and Lowe (2005) encompasses the entire period of the European Renaissance in the wide sense of the term – from the period of the Portuguese expeditions organized by Infante Henrique to the end of the 16th century and, in some respects, well into the 17th century. I share the view proposed years ago by Joaquim Barradas de Carvalho (Carvalho 1983), that the transition between the medieval and Renaissance cultures in Portugal occurred rather in the early 16th century. The mindset of Henry the Navigator and his bold knights setting off for Africa and that of Gomes Eanes de Zurara, the chronicler of the first expeditions, was still a medieval one. The shift from one mentality to the

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other was a significant one, and had a powerful impact on the shape of cultural contacts between the Portuguese and the African slaves.

In searching for the period in which to close my research about the attitudes of the Portuguese towards African slaves, I also took into account the great shift in the slave trade that occurred in the mid 1520s – the rise of large-scale export of African slaves across the Atlantic Ocean. The attitudes connected with the mass slave trade among the Portuguese people evolved gradually. Firstly, at the turn of the 15th century, the Portuguese settled the previously uninhabited island of São Tomé and established sugar plantations there. The use of slave labor in plantation agriculture affected the way slaves were treated and this was connected with their changed social function. Moreover, the plantations in São Tomé would serve as the model for the organization of similar plantations in Brazil and other parts of the New World. Secondly, the mass export of slaves from Africa to the Americas began in the mid 1520s. For this reason, in this chapter, as in the rest of the book, I have chosen the early 16th century as the end period for my research.

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The slave trade was of immense importance in the history of Africa and there is an abundance of literature on this topic. With regard to West Africa, scholars have researched two different periods and types of slavery and human trafficking. From about the 8th century AD, slaves were an important commodity in the trans-Saharan trade that developed between Arab and Berber North Africa and the states of West Sudan (Bovill 1958; Małowist 1966: 49–72; Hopkins 1973; Austen 1979; Lovejoy 1983: 23–45). Most of these slaves were taken to Morocco, Egypt, and other Levant countries, though a certain number were sold to the Mediterranean countries of Christendom. The coastal areas of West Africa were of secondary importance, and peripheral, to this trans-Saharan trade. The shift in their favor began gradually, starting with the arrival on the West African coast of the Portuguese with their offers of trade. The Portuguese succeeded in drawing part of the trans-Saharan slave trade to their trade post in Arguim. The trade in Arguim lasted for about a century, and waned after 1540 (Mendes 2008: 65–66). Also gradually, during the 16th century, the trans-Saharan trade with North Africa began to decline, a process which was sealed by the conquest of Songhai by Morocco at the end of the century (Tymowski 1974: 109–135). The transatlantic slave trade grew rapidly during the 16th century (Curtin 1975; Gemery, Hogendorn, eds. 1979; Lovejoy 1983: 35–183; Nowak 1996: 1168–1230; Eltis, Richardson 2008; Green 2012). The dates of escalation most often mentioned in the literature are 1520, 1521, and 1525 (Curtin 1969: 108–110; Elbl 1997; Green

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2012: 8, 177), which is when direct shipments of slaves from West Africa to the Americas began. According to Mendes, the first such slave transport was sent to Santo Domingo, and sailed in 1524. This trade grew substantially over the following two decades (Mendes 2008: 64–72; Eltis, Richardson 2008: 13).

Boubacar Barry presented the gradual economic shift of the Senegambia area from the long distance trade zone within West Africa to the transatlantic trade zone as a longer process, with all the consequences that the mass slave trade brought to Senegambia from the second half of the 16th century onward (Barry 1988, 1998: Part I, Chapter 1, 45). The authors of the most recent research do not deny the importance of the quantifiable factor, but also point to a consequence that is equally important in their view, namely 'the responses' of West African societies to this trade. By this, they mean not only economic, but also social and cultural changes. According to António de Almeida Mendes, '*les réponses sont plus complexes que ne le laisse entendre la compilation des chiffres monstrueux de la traite atlantique*' [the responses are more complex than the compilation of the Atlantic trade's monstrous figures would lead us to believe] (Mendes 2007: 15, after Green 2012: 9). A similar view is expressed by David Eltis and David Richardson (2008) and by Toby Green (2012: 8–9). Walter Hawthorne described and analyzed in detail the long-term economic, settlement, social, and cultural changes of the Balanta people, who responded to the European demand for slaves (Hawthorne 2003). The emergence of intermediate groups – Luso-Africans, Euro-Africans, *grumetes* (auxiliary sailors), and brokers – was discussed by Peter Mark (2002), George Brooks (2003), Philip Havik (2004), José Lingna Nafafé (2007), and the authors of a collective volume edited by Toby Green (2012). The processes described in these books were of a long-term nature, and their evolution was due to the growing intensity of the transatlantic slave trade and thus extends beyond the chronological framework of my book.

The importation into Portugal of slaves abducted or purchased in West Africa in the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century belongs neither to the first phenomenon (the trans-Saharan trade between Western Sudan and North Africa) nor to the second (the transatlantic, Euro-African-American trade). To be sure, Portuguese activities influenced both areas of trade but the Portuguese slave trade of the 15th century was a separate issue. Its size and role in the inter-regional and global economies were not large. Therefore, it could be treated as a prelude to the transatlantic trade. By choosing the beginning of the 16th century as a turning point, I wish to stress that the African slave trade in Portugal in the 15th and early 16th centuries had peculiar features that are worth considering by themselves. Kenneth Baxter Wolf is right in quoting the opinion of Portuguese knights, who considered that the abduction of people in

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West Africa in the 15th century was 'a function of warfare' (Wolf 1994: 449). It was, however, part of a wider phenomenon: in addition to the views of the knights there were also the attitudes and opinions of merchants, even though these appeared a bit later and were somewhat different. Wolf mentions this at the end of his article (Wolf 1994: 469). But in my work I wish to examine the attitudes and opinions of various social groups, both European and African. And, beyond the economic and social aspects already explored, I wish to emphasize that the Portuguese slave trade between 1441 and the beginning of the 16th century had distinct and evolving psychological and cultural aspects.

In a study of cultural contacts between two separate groups of people, the numerical size of each group is of great importance (Redfield, Linton, Herskovits 1936: 149–152; Kwaśniewski 1982: 35–40). We know that the population of Portugal in the middle of the 16th century was about one million. However, the number of slaves – forced new arrivals from Africa to Portugal – is something we can estimate only hypothetically. Statistical data are in fact sketchy and there was no continuous documentation. Moreover, numbers fluctuated between the year 1441 and the beginning of the 16th century: from small groups in the 1440s, the number of imported slaves grew to probably a few thousand a year by the end of the 15th century.

Zurara estimated that from the beginning of the expeditions through to the year 1448 (at which point he ended his work), 927 slaves had been transported from Africa (Zurara-Soares 1981: 549). In subsequent years, the intensity of slave transports increased. On a single expedition in 1455, Ca da Mosto purchased 100 people in Africa. The Venetian merchant estimated the total number of slaves imported in the 1450s at between 800 and 1,000 per year (Ca da Mosto-Leporace 1966: 27; Brulez 1968: 318–320). In the 1480s and 1490s, the number of slaves imported into Portugal from Africa was much larger. The accounts kept by Joham do Porto, the administrator (*almoxarife*) of the Casa dos Escravos in Lisbon, indicate that, from 15 June 1486 to 31 December 1493, 3,589 slaves were transported from Guinea to Lisbon. The Florentine Bartolomeo Marchionni, who bought from the Crown the right to trade in Africa, imported – according to Verlinden's assessment – 1,648 slaves in the years 1489–90 and 1493–95 (Verlinden 1955: 625–627). Although this information is piecemeal, it enables us to assume that, in the last decades of the 15th century, up to 2,000 slaves were exported from Africa annually. However, the numbers fluctuated significantly, according to Saunders, from 300 to 2,000 slaves (Saunders 1982: 19–27). Since not all slaves who were exported from Africa ended up in Portugal – some were exported to other kingdoms, mainly to Castile – the approximate number of black slaves in Portugal itself can be estimated at around 10,000.

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A lower estimate of the number of slaves brought to Portugal in the 15th century (9,000) is given by Eltis and Richardson (2008: XIII–XIV, map). A certain number of white slaves must also be added to this number (Mendes 2008: 64–65). In total, at the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, slaves presumably made up about one per cent of the population of Portugal. Saunders researched not only the number but also the distribution of slaves. In the study of cultural contact between the Portuguese and their African slaves, we must remember that the latter were concentrated in cities. There, the percentage of the slave population far exceeded the average for the whole country. Saunders calculates that, in the 1530s and 1540s, slaves comprised nearly 10 per cent of the population of Lisbon, and the same was true of Evora (Saunders 1982: 50–58). Saunders's assessment, however hypothetical, seems closer to reality than that of Mendes, who estimates that as early as about 1500 the proportion of Lisbon's population that originated in Africa (or from their descendants) was 15–20 per cent (Mendes 2012: 159). In any case, the estimations vary by a considerable range. But the two scholars, and many others, are right in claiming that it is in these urban areas that the greatest contact between the two cultures took place.

Saunders's calculations seem very cautious. In comparison, Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, followed by José Tinhorão, estimates the number of African slaves brought to Portugal from 1441 to 1505 as between 136,000 and 151,000 persons, with half of these slaves arriving in Portugal between 1475 and 1505 (Godinho 1981–1984; Tinhorão 1988; 2018: 92). This is the supposed number of people brought to Portugal, but not of those who remained there. A great number of them, most probably the majority, were taken to be sold in Castile, Flanders, England, the Italian states, Germany and other European countries (Earle, Lowe, eds., 2005: 1–14; Mendes 2008: 64, 71). During the 64 years covered by Godinho's calculations a change of generations took place. If in 1505 some of the slaves brought to Portugal after 1475 were no longer alive, this would have been even more the case for those who had arrived earlier. Then again, women slaves gave birth to children who also became slaves. We do not have more precise information to assess what these numbers were. We can thus only presume that at the beginning of the 16th century there were more than 10,000 slaves in Portugal, and perhaps as many as 20,000 to 30,000. During the decades that followed this number grew rapidly, as indicated by the estimations of Jorge Fonseca (2010: 79–96). This author compared the number and share of slaves in the entire population of Lisbon with information about the number and percentage of the slave population in the large European cities of the Mediterranean region (Fonseca 2010: 100–104). It should be remembered, however,

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that they came from different places and not all of them had been brought from Africa by the Portuguese (Fonseca 2010: 100–104). Fonseca's calculations confirm that slaves made up approximately 10 per cent of Lisbon's population (Fonseca 2010: 88–93). Apart from Lisbon and a few towns, the numbers and percentage of slaves among the Portuguese population were much lower.

Another work by Jorge Fonseca concerns the situation of slaves in the south of Portugal during a later period than the one we are looking at, that is, the 16th and 17th centuries. On the basis of baptismal records, Fonseca determined the overall number of baptized children, and the percentage of baptized slave children among them. He determined that the baptism of slave children in the south amounted to 5.54 per cent of all baptisms there in the 16th century, and 3.14 per cent in the 17th. More detailed studies of individual areas in south Portugal reveal great regional differences. In seeking to determine the overall percentage of slaves among the population of the south, Fonseca made an adjusted estimate and arrived at a presumed percentage of the slave population at 6.5–7 per cent in the 16th century, and 4 per cent in the 17th (Fonseca 2002: 20–28). Of course, these are approximate figures. The sources that detail the demographics do not provide enough information for us to go beyond such estimations. Attempts to extrapolate the figures thus obtained to the entire territory of Portugal would be equally estimative. Fonseca's calculations, however, refer to the entire 16th century. During this period, the population of Portugal grew to about 1.2 million, while the importation of slaves from Africa and their proportion of the Kingdom's general population grew even more rapidly. At the beginning of the 16th century, there were much fewer slaves there than in the second half of that century. For this reason, this calculation – which, it bears repeating, is an estimate – makes the above-mentioned figure of about 20,000–30,000 slaves in Portugal in the first years of the 16th century quite plausible.

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Zurara described in great detail the first large transport of African slaves into Lagos in 1444. Although this was not Lagos's first shipment of slaves, it made a powerful impression on the chronicler and local residents because of the number of slaves involved and the circumstances of their landing. Zurara's text provides an excellent depiction of the strong emotions the slave trade aroused. The passages of interest to us here have been quoted often, also by Verlinden (Verlinden 1955: 618–619), whose commentary – though brief – is absolutely on target. However, Verlinden did not develop the psychological thread of the analysis in the rest of his work, perhaps because psychological history was not

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yet considered an important part of historiography in the 1950s. This research was initiated by Lucien Febvre, and grew in the 1960s (Febvre 1941; Dupont 1961; Duby 1961; Geremek 1962; Mandrou 1968; Le Goff 1974; Martin 1996). Other historians have analyzed Zurara's text as a description of an exceptionally dramatic one-off event and not as the beginning of a typical process in the interaction between Africans and the Portuguese. They have used it to evoke the reader's empathy, not to have its words analyzed (Russell 1960: 25–26; Małowist 1969: 122–124). The passage, though already quoted in the literature, requires citing here, because no other description can convey the particular tension expressed by Zurara.

When caravels commanded by Lançarote returned from Africa and arrived in Lagos, the captains went ashore to report on the expedition. The day after this particular arrival, Lançarote told Infante Dom Henrique:

> My Lord, your grace well knoweth that you have to receive the fifth of these Moors, and of all that we have gained in that land, whither you sent us for the service of God or of yourself. And now these Moors, because of the long time we have been at sea; as well as for the great sorrow that you must consider they have at heart, at seeing themselves away from the land of their birth, and placed in captivity, without having any understanding of what their end is to be; – and moreover because they have not been accustomed to a life on shipboard – for all these reasons are poorly and out of condition; wherefore it seemeth to me that would be well to order them to be taken out of the caravels at dawn … (Zurara-Beazley: 79).

> Senhor: bem sabe a Vossa Mercê como haveis de haver o quinto destes mouros e de tudo o que ganhámos em aquela terra, onde por serviço de Deus e vosso nos mandastes. Mas, agora, estes mouros, pelo grande tempo que há que andámos no mar como também pelo nojo que deveis considerar que terão em seus corações, vendo-se fora da terra de sua naturalidade e postos em cativeiro sem haver qualquer conhecimento de qual será seu fim; depois, a usança que não hão de andar em navios; por tudo isto, vêm assaz mal dispostos e doentes. Pelo que me parece que será bom que, de manhã, os mandeis tirar das caravelas (Zurara-Soares, 142–143).

And so it happened. Zurara goes on with his description of the division of the captives with a prayer:

> O, Thou, heavenly Father – who with Thy powerful hand, without alteration of Thy divine essence, governest all the infinite company of Thy Holy

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> City … I pray Thee that my tears may not wrong my conscience; for it is not their religion but their humanity that maketh mine to weep in pity for their sufferings. And if the brute animals, with their bestial feelings, by a natural instinct understand the sufferings of their own kind, what wouldst Thou have my human nature to do on seeing before my eyes that miserable company, and remembering that they too are of the generation of the sons of Adam? (Zurara-Beazley: 80–81).

> Ó Tu, Celestal Pai, que, com Tua poderosa mão sem movimento, de Tua divinal essência governas toda a infinida companhia da Tua santa cidade […]. Eu Te rogo que as minhas lágrimas não sejam dano da minha consciência: porque, não por sua lei, destes, mas a sua humanidade constrange a minha [a] que chore piedosamente o seu padecimento. E se as brutas animálias com seu bestial sentir, por um natural instinto, conhecem os danos de seus semelhantes, que queres que faça esta minha humana naturaleza, vendo assim ante os meus olhos esta miserável companha, [e] lembrando-me que são da geração dos filhos de Adão?! (Zurara-Soares, 145).

Zurara's chronicle was hagiographic toward Henry the Navigator, but the scene of the division of the human spoils must have shaken him deeply, since he mustered up the following words:

> On the next day, which was the 8th of the month of August, very early in the morning, by reason of the heat, the seamen began to make ready their boats, and to take out those captives, and carry them on shore, as they were commanded. And these, placed all together in the field, were a marvelous sight; for amongst them were some white enough, fair to look upon, and well proportioned; others were less white like mulattoes; others again were as black as Ethiops, and so ugly, both in features and in body, and almost to appear (to those who saw them) the images of a lower hemisphere. But what heart could be so hard as not to be pierced with piteous feeling to see that company? For some kept their heads low and their faces bathed in tears, looking one upon another; others stood groaning very dolorously, looking up to the height of heaven, fixing their eyes upon it, crying out loudly, as if asking help of the Father of Nature; others struck their faces with the palms of their hands, throwing themselves at full length upon the ground; others made their lamentations in the manner of a dirge, after the custom of their country. And though we could not understand the words of their language, the sound of it right well

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accorded with the measure of their sadness. But to increase their sufferings still more, there now arrived those who had charge of the division of the captives, and who began to separate one from another, in order to make an equal partition of the fifths; and then was it needful to part fathers from sons, husbands from wives, brothers from brothers. No respect was shewn either to friends or relations, but each fell where his lot took him. […] And you who are so busy in making that division of the captives, look with pity upon so much misery; and see how they cling one to the other, so that you can hardly separate them. And who could finish that partition without very great toil? For as often as they had placed them in one part the sons, seeing their fathers in another, rose with great energy and rushed over to them; the mothers clasped their other children in their arms, and threw themselves flat on the ground with them; receiving blows with little pity for their own flesh, if only they might not be torn from them. And so troublously they finished the partition; for besides the toil they had with the captives, the field was quite full of people, both from the town (Lagos) and from the surrounding villages and districts, who for that day gave rest to their hands (in which lay their power to get their living) for the sole purpose of beholding this novelty. And with what they saw, while some were weeping and others separating the captives, they caused such a tumult as greatly to confuse those who directed the partition. The Infant was there, mounted upon a powerful steed, and accompanied by his retinue, making distribution of his favors, as a man who sought to gain but small treasure from his share; for of the forty-six souls that fell to him as his fifth, he made a very speedy partition of these (Zurara-Beazley, 81–83).

No outro dia, que eram 8 dias do mês de Agosto, muito cedo pela manhã, por razão da calma, começaram os mareantes de aparelhar seus batéis e [de] tirar aqueles cativos para os levarem, segundo lhes fora mandado. Os quais postos juntamente naquele campo, era uma maravilhosa coisa de ver: porque entre eles havia alguns de razoada brancura, formosos e apostos; outros, menos brancos, que queriam semelhar pardos; outros tão negros como Etiópios, tão desafeiçoados assim nas caras como nos corpos que quase parecia aos homens que os esguardavam que viam as imagens do hemisfério mais baixo. Mas qual seria o coração, por duro que ser pudesse, que não fosse pungido de piedoso sentimento vendo assim aquela companha? Porque uns tinham as caras baixas e os rostos lavados com lágrimas, olhando uns contra os outros; outros estavam gemendo mui dolorosamente, esguardando a altura dos céus, firmando os olhos

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> em eles, bradando altamente como se pedissem socorro ao Pai da Natureza; outros feriam seu rosto com suas palmas, lançando-se estendidos em meio do chão; outros faziam suas lamentações em maneira de canto, segundo o costume de sua terra, aos quais (posto que as palavras da linguagem aos nossos nao pudesse ser entendida) bem correspondiam ao grau de sua tristeza. Mas para seu dó ser mais acrescentado, sobrevieram aqueles que tinham cargo da partilha, e começaram de os apartar uns dos outros a fim de porem seus quinhões em igualdade. Pelo que convinha de necessidade se apartarem os filhos dos pais; e as mulheres, dos maridos; e os irmãos, uns dos outros. A amigos nem a parentes, não se guardava nenhuma lei; sòmente, cada um caia onde a sorte o levava [...] E vós outros, que vos trabalhais de [fazer] esta partilha: esguardai com piedade sobre tanta miséria, e vêde como se apertam uns aos outros que mal os podeis desligar. Quem poderia acabar aquela partição sem mui grande trabalho? Pois, logo que os tinham posto numa parte, os filhos que viam os pais na outra levantavam-se prestamente e iam-se para eles; as mães apertavam os outros filhos nos braços e lançavam-se com eles de bruços, recebendo feridas, com pouca piedade de suas carnes, para lhes nao serem tirados. E assim trabalhosamente os acabaram de partir; porque, além do trabalho que tinham com os cativos, o campo era todo cheio de gente, assim do lugar como das aldeias e comarcas derredor, os quais deixavam em aquele dia folgar suas mãos em que restava a força do seu ganho, sòmente por ver aquela novidade. E com estas coisas que viam, uns chorando, outros falando, faziam tamanho alvoroço que punham em torvação os governadores daquela partilha. O Infante era ali, em cima de um poderoso cavalo, acompanhado de suas gentes, repartindo suas mercês como homem que de sua parte queria fazer pequeno tesouro. Porque de 46 almas que aconteceram no seu quinto, mui breve fez deles sua partilha... (Zurara-Soares, 146–148).

The chronicler consoled himself with the notion that the salvation of the slaves' souls was more important than their suffering:

> [...] for, as we said before, as soon as they understood our language they turned Christians with very little ado. [...] But from this time forth they began to acquire some knowledge of our country; in which they found great abundance, and our men began to treat them with great favor. For as our people did not find them hardened in the belief of the other Moors; and saw how they came in unto the law of Christ with a good will; they made no difference between them and their free servants, born in our own country (Zurara-Beazley: 84).

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> [...] pois como já dissemos, logo que haviam conhecimento da linguagem, com pequeno movimento se tornavam cristãos [...]; [posto isso] foram eles porém ao diante havendo conhecimento da terra, na qual achavam grande abastança, e além disso [conhecimento de] como os tratavam com grande favor. Pois, porque as gentes os não achavam endurentados na crença dos outros mouros e viam que, de boa vontade, vinham para a lei de Cristo, não faziam de eles diferença [em ralação] aos servidores livres naturais da própria terra (Zurara-Soares: 148–149).

Slaves were baptized and their souls were saved, which justified, in Zurara's eyes, the conduct of Infante Dom Henrique and those around him. But the sight of emaciated prisoners and the enormity of their misfortune, especially when families were separated, caused ordinary people watching the event to protest. It led to tumult. Even the perpetrators were 'confused.' In the end, Infante Dom Henrique managed to restore order and carry out the planned division of the group. In this scene, the desperation felt by the slaves connected with the human compassion of the ordinary residents of Lagos; it collided with human greed and with the cruelty shown by the Infante's milieu. Beyond that – even though the importation of African slaves had just begun – there emerged a certain ease by which other people's sufferings and one's own ruthless deeds could be justified by calling upon a higher good. Horrified ordinary people, who derived no benefit from the practice, expressed their sympathy. Similar feelings ran so deep within Zurara that he had to express them as well.

Zurara probably witnessed this scene. He described not only the explosion of emotions but also the physical appearance of the captured Africans. Above all, he viewed them as humans, 'descendants of Adam.' And he saw more: their diversity of color, appearance, sex, and age. He saw – according to his own criteria – beauty and ugliness. Most of these criteria would, in the future, be used in assessing the value of slaves. But in the moment when this scene was playing itself out, it was an experience that revealed to observers the diversity of the human race. Black slaves had been known in the Mediterranean world from antiquity and throughout the entire Middle Ages (Snowden 1970; Bieżuńska-Małowist, Małowist 1987: 46, 55–57, 320–324), but in this case, the vision of a group of about 230–240 humans allowed for more conclusions to be drawn; it was a new experience.

There is another passage in this section from Zurara's chronicle that requires mentioning, namely Lançarote's comments on the poor mental and physical health of the slaves, which had resulted from their capture, the sudden change in their circumstances, the arduous sea voyage, their fears and despair. It is the only text from the 15th century that testifies to the conditions of transported

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slaves and that speaks of the despair of the captured people, but it allows us to imagine the magnitude of the suffering caused by the slave trade at the time.

In an article on 15th-century eyewitness accounts of the early discoveries, Peter Russell pointed out that Alvise Ca da Mosto, Antoniotto Usodimare, and Eustache Delafosse did not write a word about the transportation of slaves to Portugal (Russell 2009: 323), even though each of them purchased slaves in Africa and wrote about these purchases without inhibition. From the moment the 'human goods' were loaded onto the caravels, they disappeared from the descriptions. The only reference was left by Delafosse, who wrote about a female slave who had jumped into the sea to swim home to the Sierra Leone shore, and who was caught by a sloop sent in pursuit (Delafosse-Escudier: 39).

Regarding the silence of travelers and merchants on the conditions involved in the transport of slaves, the fact is that it was probably a very touchy subject; they had no desire to share their knowledge with readers. We must keep in mind that the caravels were small-sized vessels, and their crews consisted of 20–30 people (Chaunu 1969: 284–288; Saunders 1982: 11). If between 30 and 50 slaves were crowded into a small caravel – and, according to Saunders, up to 120 slaves could fit into a large caravel, and 150 into a nave – conditions during transportation must have been dreadful. Some of the slaves died before they reached Portugal.

Zurara consoled himself not only with the fact that the souls of baptized slaves had been saved. He also believed their lives in Portugal would be better than in Africa. He described the good treatment they received, similar to the treatment received by free domestic servants. Not only were their souls saved but also their bodies. Because previously:

> they lived like beasts, without any custom of reasonable beings – for they had no knowledge of bread or wine, and they were without the covering of clothes, or the lodgment of houses; and worse than all, through the great ignorance that was in them, in that they had no understanding of good, but only knew how to live in a bestial sloth. But as soon as they began to come to this land, and men gave them prepared food and coverings for their bodies, their bellies began to swell, and for a time they were ill; until they were accustomed to the nature of the country; but some of them were so made that they were not able to endure it and died, but as Christians […] First, that after they had come to this land of Portugal, they never more tried to fly, but rather in time forgot all about their own country, as soon as they began to taste the good things of this one; secondly, that they were very loyal and obedient servants, without malice;

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> thirdly, that they were not so inclined to lechery as the others; fourthly, that after they began to use clothing they were for the most part very fond of display, so that they took great delight in robes of showy colours. […] And what is still better, as I have already said, they turned themselves with a good will into the path of the true faith […] and in this same they died (Zurara-Beazley: 84).

> […] por viverem, assim, como bestas, sem qualquer preceito de criaturas racionais. Porque eles não sabiam que era pão nem vinho, nem cobertura de pano, nem alojamento de casa; e o pior, era a grande ignorância que em eles havia, pela qual não haviam qualquer conhecimento de bem; sòmente [sabiam] viver em uma ociosidade bestial. E logo, como começavam de vir a esta terra e lhes davam os mantimentos artificiais e as coberturas para os corpos, começavam de lhes crescer os ventres e, por tempos, eram enfermos até que se reformavam com a natureza da terra; em o que alguns deles eram tão compleicionados que o não podiam suportar, e morriaram, todavia cristãos […] a primeira, que depois que eram em esta terra nunca mais se trabalhavam de fugir, antes, com o tempo se esqueciam, de todo, da sua [terra], logo que começavam [a] sentir as bondades de esta; e a segunda, que eram muito leais e obedientes servidores sem malícia; e a terceira, que não eram tão chegados à luxúria como os outros; e a quarta, que depois que usavam os vestidos eram geralmente muito louçãōos de vontade, pelo que folgavam muito com roupas de cores divisadas […]. E o melhor era, como já tenho dito, que se tornavam de boa vontade ao caminho da Fé, na qual […] faziam seus finis (Zurara-Soares: 150–152).

The blessing of being and living in captivity was therefore relative, even in Zurara's opinion. However, he persisted in convincing himself and his readers that this was all for the good of the Africans. He judged that the 'Moors' captured in West Africa differed greatly from those taken in North Africa.

The text cited above can also be regarded as a kind of program for handling slaves. It was – using modern terminology – a program of acculturation. Zurara was not expressing his own views in this regard, but rather the views of his milieu – that is, the royal court and that of Infante Dom Henrique. No doubt, at the Infante's court, the most important goal was to baptize pagans, though it was not the only one. The consequence of this thinking was the possibility that, through baptism, these people could join the community of Christians. As slaves, they would find themselves at the bottom of the social structure, but they would be part of it.

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We can corroborate Zurara's view about the fate of African slaves from other parts of his chronicle, but above all, thanks to the analysis of other sources. The slaves' unhappiness and their desire to gain freedom are evidenced by their attempts to escape. The earliest such example, which we have discussed earlier in the book, involves the fate of a slave named Adahu, a Berber who had been captured in 1441 by an expedition led by Nuno Tristão. Adahu was the descendant of a noble family. The information he gave the Portuguese during questioning was regarded as valuable. He was lavished with gifts, but despite this affluence, he wanted his freedom back, and fled as soon as he was sent ashore as an interpreter. Zurara referred to this with understanding, writing: 'As you know that naturally every prisoner desireth to be free' (*Como sabeis, naturalmente todo preso deseja ser livre…*) (Zurara-Beazley: 54; Zurara-Soares: 103). During another expedition in 1443 to Cabo Blanco and the island of Arguim, another interpreter escaped – a slave who was serving on Gonçalo de Sintra's caravel (Zurara-Soares: 157). Apparently, the 'benefits' did not adequately compensate the slaves for their loss of freedom.

In the mid-1450s, when Ca da Mosto was travelling to Africa, interpreters no longer escaped. Perhaps controls had been tightened (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 49–50). Perhaps African rulers – such as Budomel, who was trading with the Venetian merchant – also required interpreters, so they prevented them from escaping. It is possible, too, that over the years, as slaves got used to life in Portugal, their desire for freedom and to return home diminished.

The situation of the interpreter-slaves was exceptional. Most of them were brought by caravel to those parts of the African coast that they had originally come from, which increased their chances of a successful escape. Other slaves taken to Portugal had almost no chance to get back to Africa, unless they served as caravel crew members, though a slave named Pero Negro – who will be discussed shortly – managed to escape with a few others on barges to Fez.

If slaves escaped from their owners, they usually hid in Portugal or Castile. Of the more than 150 documents that relate to slaves, published in the *Portugaliae Monumenta Africana*, only 10 refer to fugitive slaves (PMA: vol. 1 no. 212/1488; vol. 2 nos. 58/1493, 107/1495, 114/1495, 153/1496, 164/1497; vol. 3 nos. 24/1500, 50/1500, 90/1501, 130/1502). Thus, escape was either a sporadic event, or – more likely – the runaway was found so quickly that it was not necessary to set a legal procedure in motion. Escapes appear relatively late in the documents. The first mention, from 1488, relates to a complex situation. It involves an act of amnesty extended by King João II to João de Castanheira, a resident of Madeira who had facilitated the escape of João Penteado, a slave owned by Fernão Penteado, who had been condemned to exile on the island of São Tomé. No less complicated was the situation described in a document dated 12 May

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1493. It was the order for the manumission of a black slave, Pero Negro, originally from Guinea, who had fled first to Fez, but then returned to the Kingdom of Portugal because he felt himself to be a Christian and did not want lose his faith (*que vemdo elle que era cristão e nom queria leixar a fee de Nostro Senhor Jesuu Cristo se tornara a estes nosos regnnos*) (PMA: vol. 2 no. 58; the issuer was Doctor Rui Boto, dean at the University of Coimbra).

Other documents that provide evidence of escapes come from 1495 (two), 1496, 1497, 1500 (two), 1501, and 1502. These records always included the names of slaves, their gender, their color, and their age. Their ages range between 28 and 35 years; among the runaways, no one is particularly young or old and there is not a single woman. The documents are authorizations that had been issued by owners to their representatives to find and return a fugitive slave. Most of these documents come from the notarial records in Seville, and are evidence of the strong connections between Seville and Portugal. In records from 1495 and 1500, two runaways had fled to Portugal, where they were pursued. A slave named Anton escaped in 1496 not to Portugal, but to Cordoba. According to the records, some runaways 'speak Portuguese.' In two other documents, a slave owner empowered his plenipotentiary not just to return the captured runaway but to sell him (1497 and 1502). Apparently, the owner anticipated further escapes and trouble.

These documents are from the 1490s and the early 1500s. The documentation's absence prior to 1488, and its appearance in the 1490s, might be evidence of a change in the runaways' situation. Between 1440 and 1480, when there were relatively few slaves, their capture was easy and accomplished quickly. But once the number of black slaves increased and once they started to be given their freedom, a runaway's chances of escaping, hiding, and creating an appearance of legal residency in a given place became greater. The routines of slave life, which had a certain degree of latitude, could also favor escapees. There are many indications that a slave's daily routine resembled the life of free domestic servants, and was generally like that of the life led by free people in the lower social strata. This latitude in the life of a slave challenged the authorities in taking countermeasures to prevent escape.

On 22 March 1502, a decree was issued in the name of King Manuel the Fortunate, which prohibited slaves – male and female, black and white – from eating and drinking in taverns and shops and other places of this kind, public and private, both in Lisbon and in the surrounding area. Owners of inns and shops who broke the rules were subject to fines and taverns were ordered to close at night (PMA: vol. 3 no. 146). Repeated bans on playing and feasting in taverns are discussed by Tinhorão (2018: 138). Such prohibitions had little effect, however. This can be seen in the picture painted by an anonymous artist

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from the Netherlands (ca. 1560). Although it was painted at a later date than the times in question, it illustrates the changes in customs. The painting shows black and white people of different social standing gathered on the square of the royal fountain – Chafariz d'El Rei – in the Lisbon quarter of Alfama. In the foreground is a black knight on a splendid steed, in parade outfit, clad in a coat with a red cross, the symbol of a knightly order. Of course, he was a freed slave, a man of success, and one of a few. Also visible are white functionaries and well-to-do young people. More numerous, consistent with the social reality, were black slaves and freedmen, but also white servants, all of lower social standing. There is also a white beggar asking for alms. Two guards are escorting an inebriated black slave – a scene observed by a young black woman with a pitcher of water on her head. In another part of the painting we can see a dancing couple, a black young man and a white woman, both of low social standing, as can be deduced from their bare feet. This pair represents the most telling testimony of the inclusion of black slaves into the everyday life and entertainment of Lisbon population in the 16th century. The painting is held in the private Berardo Collection in Lisbon.

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A certain degree of freedom and the many similarities between the economic situation of the slaves and that of the free but poor Portuguese cannot overshadow the fundamentally different fate and psychological aspects of life of free people on the one hand, and of slaves on the other. The vast majority of documents published in the PMA, which concern slaves, involve the act of sale. These sales were documented using a form, on which it was recorded who was selling the slave, to whom, and for how much; then it gave the slave's name, gender, color, age, and place of origin in Africa (or birth in Europe). A similar form was used for lists of slaves who were sold in bulk in specific months or years. If the shipment involved slaves who had just arrived from Africa, and were not yet baptized, then their names were not given; the only information recorded was the location at which the ship had loaded the slaves, and the number of slaves.

The overwhelming majority of women, men and children who were sold had Christian names. These were studied by Jose Leite de Vasconcelos (Vasconcelos 1928: 361–381), and recently by Fonseca (Fonseca 2010: 353–359). Baptism and the assignation of names were performed upon the slave's arrival in Portugal. Zurara mentioned that efforts were made to postpone the ceremony until the slave learned at least some Portuguese and could understand the meaning of baptism. Probably, the name of a slave was chosen by the owner and was

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dictated by fashion to some extent. In the last two decades of the 15th century and the first decade of the 16th century, the name given most often to female slaves was Catalina, followed by Maria. Among male slaves, no name predominates but most often we find the names Juan, Pedro, and Diego. In volumes 1 to 3 of the PMA, 89 records were published, concerning mainly the sale and manumission of slaves, along with their names, including 42 that involved women and girls. Of these, 15 were named Catalina. Among the 47 records involving men and boys, the name of Juan was given to 9 of them, and the names of Pedro and Diego to 5 each. The records are from Portugal and Seville, which is why names are given in either Portuguese or Spanish form. The range of names given to children born to slaves was wider. Perhaps, the mother's opinion counted in these cases. Calculations made by Fonseca, and concerning only Portugal throughout the entire 16th century, indicate that among slave men and boys, the most popular were the Christian names António, Francisco, Pedro, and João, while Diogo came in 10th place. Among women and girls, the most popular names were Maria, Catarina, Isabel, Antónia (Fonseca 2010: 354, 356).

Among the slaves born in Portugal, there is no person with a non-Christian name. Among slaves abducted or purchased in Africa and brought to Portugal, non-Christian names did occur, but this was rare. A Moor woman freed in 1454, and a black slave woman from Guinea sold in 1472, both kept the Muslim name of Fatima (PMA: vol. 1 no. 72, vol. 2 no. 122). There are two similar cases regarding men: Homar (Omar), freed in 1471, from Guinea and held by his owners 'a long time' (*muito tempo*), and Mahomet, freed in 1493, an older slave of 60 (PMA: vol. 1 no. 70, vol. 2 no. 61). It can be assumed that the practise of keeping a Muslim name existed, but it was rare. In addition, a slave could refuse to be baptized, though in doing so he reduced his chances of manumission. Therefore, Muslim names were evidenced only occasionally at the end of the 15th century. Royal documents that related to the purchase of clothes for slaves in 1493 mention a certain Mafamede – the only one among 12 listed slaves who did not have a Christian name (PMA: vol. 2 no. 57). Cases when baptism was refused are noted by Zurara (Zurara-Soares: 549).

A black slave from Guinea named Bukar is mentioned in a document from 1495, and in 1502 a certain Amar was sold, a Wolof around 30 years of age (PMA: vol. 2 no. 116, vol. 3 no. 175). In 1500, according to the notarial records in the Seville town books, the owner of a black 10-year-old boy named Muça transferred the young slave to a jewelry workshop for an apprenticeship (PMA: vol. 2 no. 262). These cases perhaps reflect instances of slaves who had refused to be baptized.

There are also records of black slaves who maintained their original, non-Muslim names. In 1480, a female Mandingo slave of about 18 years old, whose

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name was Banbana, was sold. In 1489, a Wolof slave woman about 30 years old, whose name was Penda, was sold (PMA: vol. 1 no. 119, vol. 2 no. 4). The African or non-African origin of several other names is doubtful. A document dated 17 March 1493 shows that King João II still had slaves with African, non-Muslim names. It cites three of them: Tanbo, Tonbe and Baybry (PMA: vol. 2 no. 57). But these were, at that time, exceptional cases. There could have various reasons other than a slave's rejection of baptism behind a decision to keep a non-Christian name: it might well have been in the interests of the owner. Afonso V, when freeing the Moor woman Fatima in 1454, obligated her to serve in Guinea; perhaps it was preferable in Africa to have a Muslim name instead of a Christian name.

Common practise consisted of assigning a Christian name during baptism and using that name at least officially. The documents do not allow us to assess to what extent slaves remembered their African names, wanted to keep them, or used them in circumstances beyond the control of their owners. In one document from 1475, a slave appears under two names, Pedro-Muça, a Christian name and a Muslim name (PMA: vol. 1 no. 95). He was an interpreter lent out to work in Guinea, which reminds us of Afonso V's decision described above, although we do not know if Fatima had been given a Christian name.

In most cases, a slave who had been baptized and given a new name was thereby brought into Portuguese Christian society. It was both a symbolic and a real change in that person's life. Undoubtedly, it exerted an influence on his or her psyche, though we do not know the degree to which it changed self-identification; it was probably different in different cases. For the outside world, baptism and a new name changed how the slave was perceived. He or she became a member of the community, though, of course, at the lowest rank of society.

Beyond baptism and a name change, another important way in which a slave was assimilated into the Portuguese community was through clothing. Slaves came from various regions of Africa. In places influenced by Islam, and where the growing of cotton was developed, it was common to cover the body with a robe, or at least a loincloth (Monteil 1926: 585–684). But in places where cotton was not grown, in the tropical forests on the coast of Guinea from Sierra Leone to Benin, nudity was common. There, only the minority elite could wear imported cotton clothing. Local clothing and loincloths were made from leaves and plant fiber.

During the first Portuguese expeditions to Africa, the explorers viewed nudity critically and very emotionally (Chabrowska 2008: 21–28). They considered it as a sign of the Africans' civilizational inferiority. Seeking to maximize profit, slave traders shifted the obligation to clothe the slaves onto the buyers.

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Even if provided with a modest loincloth, the slaves still had to be clothed in Portugal as they could not function in society naked.

Zurara tells us – after the previously quoted passage about events in Lagos – that the duty to clothe the slaves fell to their owners from the moment of purchase. After the slaves had been bought, food was prepared for them and 'their bodies were covered with clothing'; those who accepted the garments, learned to like the brightly colored robes, and some gathered pieces of cloth that fell from the Portuguese robes, and they sewed these colorful pieces onto their garments and gained great pleasure from this (Zurara-Soares: 151–152). Thus, among the slaves there was a strong sense of their own aesthetic, and from the moment they found themselves in Portugal, they tried to adapt this aesthetic to the new conditions. This phenomenon was so pronounced that Portuguese observers took notice of it from very early on.

An account of the journey by Silesian knight Niclas von Popplau to Portugal in 1484 confirms that the obligation to clothe slaves customarily fell to the buyer. Popplau was in Portugal from August to September 1484, in the service of Emperor Frederick III. One purpose of his journey was to gather intelligence. The Silesian knight received two valuable slaves from the king of Portugal. Envoys of the king had offered him a choice from 50 slaves who had been 'brought in on ships about eight days earlier.' They were purchased in Lisbon in the name of the king and in the knight's presence. Popplau noted: 'I dressed them immediately because they were completely naked, as God had created them' – *Die selben kleidet ich allso bald, denn sie waren ganz nacket wie sie Gott geschaffen hatte* (Popplau 1998: 83).

Evidence regarding the clothing of slaves by owners also exists in official documents. Five of these, found in the collections of the PMA, contain João II's royal instructions in 1493 to an administrator named Rui Gil, who was to deliver various pieces of clothing to particular slaves who worked in the royal stables (PMA: vol. 2, no. 57, 63, 66, 68, 80). The king indicated the exact types of garments: shirts, pants, caps, various kinds of coats, all of various textiles, including some imported from Bristol, Ypres, and France. These were expensive clothes; after all, they were for royal slaves who represented the ruler. One instruction concerns three slaves just imported from the Congo by a certain Pedro. Later, from the year 1510, we have a note sent by the otherwise unknown Maria Pires to an unidentified secretary, in which she recommends the preparation of cotton and linen garments needed 'to clothe the blacks' – *para vestir os negros* (PMA: vol. 5, no. 197). In yet another, in 1475, an owner lending a slave-interpreter set a condition, beyond compensation for himself, that if the trade brought good results, then that interpreter would get 50 *maravedi* for his clothing – *a su vestuario* (PMA: vol. 1, no. 95). In the last half of the 15th century

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and in the 16th century, the *maravedi* was a small copper Spanish coin. According to Fernand Braudel, in the 16th century 350 *maravedi* equaled one gold ducat, and 400 *maravedi* one gold escudo in coin (Braudel 1995: vol. 1, 420).

Documents of this type are rare. They were usually issued by people who owned many slaves, and who used officials as go-betweens. If the buyer bought one or a couple slaves, he also bought them clothes, without having to document this.

Clothing slaves was as much a spontaneous decision as it was an important method of bringing these people into the Portuguese community. Acculturation occurred, in this case, relatively quickly and effectively, since clothing did not arouse resistance among slaves, but rather, was willingly accepted. According to Fonseca, the situation did not change in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was the responsibility of slave owners to clothe their slaves. In most cases, the latter's attire did not differ from that of the poor, free Portuguese (Fonseca 2002: 93–98). This is borne out by, among other sources, iconography, including the painting of Chafariz d'El Rei. In this painting, all black slaves or freed slaves are shown fully clothed and some even wear elegant attire. Only a few slaves, presumably those who were being offered for sale, are wearing just a loincloth. Obviously, more substantial clothing would be provided by their future owner.

The way in which slaves were described at the time of sale or manumission included details that would have been important to their sense of a distinct identity and their connection with the African culture from which they had been uprooted. While sought by the seller and the buyer alike, the information about these details was, at the same time, inconsistent with the general objective of Portuguese slave owners, which was acculturation. It is puzzling that documents include details about the slave's place of origin in Africa or an ascribed ethnic origin. Such terms as '*natural de…*' (which means 'coming from…' or 'born in…') were used. This information was tied to skin color (*escrava negra* / *escravo negro*). In the vast majority of cases, documents relating to individual slaves included information about their origin. For example, the documents issued by Afonso V on 17 May 1454: '*…Fatima moura natural de terra 'Arzique*'…; on 18 Dec. 1471: *… huum escravo de Guinee per nome chamado Homar …*; and on 3 April 1492: *… esclavo de color negro, que a por nonbre Juan, natural de Xolofo …*. (PMA: vol. 1 nos. 11, 17, vol. 2 no. 45). Bulk lists of large transports of slaves included separate headings: origin (*origem*) and skin color (*cor*). For example, the list of slaves sold in Seville in January, February, and March 1496 contains the following headings: number of slaves, gender, skin, age, origin, seller, buyer, price, transaction fee (PMA: vol. 2 no. 158). I write about the strong trade connections between Portugal and Seville, and the similarity of the situ-

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ation of slaves in both places, further on. Ruth Pike also wrote about this (Pike 1967: 344–359).

The documents indicated a slave's country (or region) of origin or ascribed ethnicity – with no distinction made between these types of identification. This information was noted meticulously, which indicates that it was to be used effectively to identify slaves. Perhaps certain places of origin were perceived to provide better quality 'goods.' But the fact is that we do not know how this indicator was used by the owners and buyers, who did not speak the various African languages, which could have helped them identify their slaves' origins. Perhaps, slave owners relied on the statements by traders who imported the slaves from Africa, or on the information given by the slaves themselves about their origin. It is likely that owners recognized different physiognomic features in their slaves and thereby linked them to their place of origin in Africa. In any case, the determination of place of origin (or ethnicity) must have been useful, since it was commonly noted.

If the original owner or subsequent purchaser recorded, remembered and reiterated his slaves' origins, that information would be more easily preserved in the minds of the Africans living in captivity. It was a part of their self-identification. It enabled them to interact with slaves of the same origin and even to retain some elements of their own African culture, including not only language, but dancing, singing, music, and various other social gestures (Saunders 1982: 89). Of course, among the second generation born in Portugal, identification with African ancestry probably diminished in strength. Nonetheless, it could persist in children through their mother and could be renewed by the continuous importation to Portugal of slaves from the same region of Africa.

Some African slaves were white. These people came from the Canary Islands and the Saharan coast of West Africa, inhabited by the Azeneg Berbers. Zurara provided rich information about the capture of slaves from both groups (Zurara-Soares: 93–94, 110, 121, 133–134, 139–140). While the Azeneg are not mentioned in documents contained in the PMA (notarial records in Seville), the Canarians are mentioned several times (PMA: vol. 1 no. 73/1472; vol. 2 no. 158/1496; vol. 3 no. 185/1503). However, in these documents, black slaves are mentioned most often, and while their most frequently recorded place of origin is Guinea, defined rather generally (that is, the black African coast south of the mouth of the Senegal River), specific information about them shows up in relatively large amounts. In second place (after Guinea), in terms of the number of mentions, is the Wolof country and people (PMA: vol. 1, no. 122/1480; vol. 2, no. 4/1489, no. 45/1492, no. 53/1492, no. 54/1492, no. 65/1493, no. 69/1493, no. 109/1495, no. 124/1495, no. 224/1498; vol. 3, no. 107//1501, no. 171/1502, no. 175/1502, no. 211/1503). Information about slaves from Çapa or Zapa (perhaps Sapis or

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Sapes from the area around Sierra Leone) is relatively abundant. Less numerous are references to the Mandingo. The western Mandingo people, the Mande, inhabited lands on the middle and lower course of the Gambia and Casamansa rivers (Çapa, Zapa – PMA: vol. 3, no. 39/1500, no. 79/1501, no. 87/1501, no. 173/1502; Mandingo – PMA: vol. 1, no. 118/1480, no. 119/1480; vol. 2, no. 139/1496). One piece of information refers to slaves from Benin: King Manuel the Fortunate frees a slave from Benin called Lourenço (PMA: vol. 3, no. 74/1501). Mina (Elmina) is also mentioned once: King Manuel the Fortunate frees the slave Beatriz Gomez for services at Mina (PMA: vol. 2, no. 239/1499).

The fact that Mina is rarely mentioned is not surprising, since, until the the reign of João III, slaves were brought from Benin to Mina, but they were not then exported from Mina to Portugal. Other places of origin are also mentioned – Alem, Gogoli, Cap de Guer, Tymes – but some of them are difficult to identify (PMA: vol. 2, no. 61/1493, no. 122/1495; vol. 3, no. 57/1501, no. 142/1502, no. 201/1503). The places of origin of African slaves are discussed by Arlindo Caldeira (2017: 73–84).

All these names had meaning for the people who prepared these documents; they were understandable to them and served as a reference to the geography and languages in Africa. The names circulated in Portugal and were carried to Seville along with the slaves who were sold there. They were used in the legal process of identifying and assessing the value of the slaves, but they were also a medium of information, not only about these slaves, but about Africa itself. They formed the popular imaginary concerning Africa and its regional differences, and it was precisely because of the slave trade and the ways in which slaves were identified that this information reached a much wider group of people than just sailors and traders. The names were one of the many carriers of knowledge about Africa, practical and easily digestible. Africa, in all its regional and cultural diversity, became present in the minds, and in the everyday lives, of ordinary Portuguese people and the residents of Seville who had strong ties to Portugal.

This is all the more true given that slaves of both genders were typically employed as domestic servants (Verlinden 1955: 632; Saunders 1982: 66–69). In this setting, cultural contact had a direct impact. Male and female slaves who worked in their owner's home knew well the owner and his family, their lifestyle, and their habits. They often took the name of the owner (PMA: vol. 1, no. 212/1488; vol. 3, no. 64/1501). Similarly, the owner knew the servant well, his or her way of living and manners. Through contact that was so personal – though it was marked and burdened by the slave's dependency – there existed on both sides a whole range of attitudes, feelings and modes of behavior. We can imagine what it was like, but the sources give us a glimpse of only a small

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part of it. In any case, there is no doubt that it was a matter of mutual acquaintanceship.

It worked similarly with regard to other slave occupations known to us. If a slave served on the Portuguese caravels sailing to Africa, for example as an interpreter, he had very close contact with the crew. He could serve as a deckhand, though usually it was freedmen who were employed in this role and not slaves. Young slaves handed over by their owners to craft workshops for an apprenticeship, or employed as street vendors and water carriers, also had close contact with local Portuguese society (Saunders 1982: 76–77). Large groups of several dozen slaves employed in establishments such as mills, furnaces, and forges, who – because of the specific nature of these workplaces and the labor performed there – did not have extensive contact with the local community, were quite rare (PMA: vol. 2, no. 177/1497; vol. 3, no. 92/1501). Work undertaken mainly by slave women as domestic servants and in casual jobs, such as selling water on the Lisbon streets, led to social tension. According to António Mendes, the free, poor population of Lisbon felt wronged by competition from the slave laborers. In response, King Manuel I banned black women, both slaves and freed women, from working in the hawking trade (*la vente ambulante*) (Mendes 2012: 160). This ban was not effective. In the decades that followed, this type of work continued to be the domain of black slave women. The painting of Chafariz d'El Rei from around 1560, in which black and white women trade in water, walk together and converse, testifies eloquently to the ban's ineffectiveness. In all likelihood, the owners of the slaves, who benefited from their labor, opposed this ban.

The unmistakable proximity in which most owners and their slaves lived their lives facilitated the two-way transmission of information. This did not happen in an orderly and planned way (as was the case at the court of Infante Dom Henrique), but spontaneously, as a side effect of continuous contact. In any case, one must keep in mind that this contact had a specific nature – it connected master and slave, and was unequal. The slave lived under the constant threat of a change in circumstances, including being sold to another owner.

The passage of Zurara's chronicle quoted at the beginning of this chapter testifies to the pity many felt, and the protests evoked, when slaves were separated, which was spontaneously perceived as a very cruel act. But as the slave trade developed over time, hearts hardened. The anguished – and, in our eyes, commendable – reaction of the common people of Lagos was not repeated. Research into cruelty in human relationships raises numerous problems (Tazbir 1993: 7–26). In this research, can we assess cruelty using our contemporary values and feelings? Or do we rather need to describe and analyze the value

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and judgment systems that existed in the past, and thus look for a measure of cruelty typical to the society we are examining? That is, in a society in which the slave trade became an everyday occurrence that was no longer considered cruel? This having been said, exceptional and pointless abuses were treated as cruel, as shown by the conviction in 1511 of Gonçalo Roiz, a slave ship captain who had thrown live adult and child slaves into the sea (MMA 1952: 215–221).

During the mass transportation of large groups of slaves from Africa to Portugal, the term *peças* – 'pieces' – came into use to count people. In lists of slaves transported at the beginning of the 16th century, *peça* meant one adult person, but also a woman with a small child (PMA: vol. 3, no. 260/1504, no. 262/1505, no. 263/1505). Thus, in the list of slaves transported in 1506 from Arguim, six women with young children were identified as six pieces ([…] *item seis molheres* […] *com suas cryanças* […] *6 peças* […]) (PMA: vol. 5 no. 46/1506). This custom became widespread over the course of the 16th century and became an expression of the dehumanization of the 'human commodity.' Tying a female slave to her baby also made practical sense, because it created the possibility of the child's survival, even though it limited the woman's ability to work for some time.

Slaves who had just arrived from Africa, as well as those already owned by someone in Portugal, were both subject to sale. A certain number of them were transported to Castile. This export did not raise objections, since they were subject to customs fees. Numerous notarial records from the registers of the city of Seville have been published in PMA. The decision of the publishers to include this material in the Portuguese *Monumenta* helps us to see the similarity of the situation of slaves in Portugal and Seville.

However, sales of slaves to foreigners from countries further afield in the 15th century raised concerns and objections. In 1466, the traveler Leo of Rozmital was supposed to obtain two black slaves from King Afonso V, but Ferdinand Duke of Viseu successfully prevented this, arguing that the slaves had been baptized and could no longer be exchanged. But surely this was not the reason for withholding the gift, since baptized slaves were generally sold without restriction. Rather, those who prevented the exchange feared that foreigners would be able to gather valuable intelligence from slaves who had been formerly employed at the king's court. According to some informants, Leo instead received two steeds; according to others – two white 'Moor' slaves (Popplau 1998: 74, footnote 311).

Similarly, the Silesian knight Niclas von Popplau was supposed to be presented with 'two live black girls' (… *zwey lebendige Möhrin*) in 1484 by King João II, but for unknown reasons he did not receive them. Instead, he was given two slaves purchased at the slave market. The Silesian knight noted that 'the

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country of the black Moors, Guinea … brings to Portugal every year … a great deal of gold and black Moors taken into slavery' – *Man nennet sonsten der Mohren Landt Ginea. Bringt jährlich sehr viel Goldes und gefangener Mohren aus dem Lande in Portugall* (Popplau 1998: 74, 78). When Popplau traveled to Castile with the slaves, a customs duty was imposed, which the knight opposed, but to no avail (Popplau 1998: 90–93). As he did not mention them again in his account, Popplau most probably sold them in Seville.

The fate of those two slaves – imported from Africa, sold in Portugal to an envoy of the king, given as a present to a foreigner, transported to Castile, and sold there again – mirrors the uncertainty and volatility of a slave's life. This was especially true for slaves who were freshly imported from Africa.

Those who had long been someone's property were also subject to sale. Among the many transactions of this kind, documents regarding the sale of children attract special attention. How these transactions were performed, and their circumstances, can serve as a guide to the type of contact the owners had with their slaves. According to medieval principles, let us accept the age of 12 as the border between childhood and adulthood, in the context, for example, of the possibility of marriage. One must also recall the method by which a slave's age was determined. Only those born in Portugal and then baptized could have a precisely established age. For others, age was defined in terms like 'about,' or 'more or less' – *de hedad de quarenta años, poco mas o menos* (for example, PMA: vol. 1, no. 142/1483).

Among the documents of interest to us from the PMA collection are 16 notarial acts from Seville on the sale of children, or their transfer, to pay off debts (PMA: vol. 2, no. 5/1489, no. 6/1489, no. 52/1492, no. 54/1494, no. 70/1493, no. 104/1495, no. 121/1495; vol. 3, no. 17/1500, no. 48/1501, no. 139/1502, no. 152/1502, no. 172/1502, no. 202/1503, no. 224/1504, no. 249/1505; vol. 5, no. 29/1505). This is, of course, a limited selection of documents, but it seems to be representative. These 16 documents are from the period 1489 to 1505. However, children were imported from the very beginning of the trade in African slaves (as the excerpt quoted above from Zurara's chronicle shows). The proportion of children in shipments from Arguim to Portugal from 1511 to 1522 is discussed by António de Almeida Mendes. Of 1,248 slaves, 54 per cent were women, 25 per cent were men, and 21 per cent were children, while the share of children under age 7 stood at 4 per cent (Mendes 2009: 23, 30). The number of slaves transported from West Africa before this period was smaller, but the percentages representing slaves' gender and age provided by Mendes are a reliable comparative indicator. It is also worth recalling the well-known and frequently quoted sentence from the Introduction to the book by Claire C. Robertson and Martin Klein: 'Most slaves in sub-Saharan Africa were women' (Robertson, Klein 1997: 3).

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In the 16 cited documents, the children's ages span from 15 days to 11 years. Children were most often between 5 and 10 years old when they were sold, which is when they were considered to be able to live without their mothers. Notarial acts of sale of individual female slaves along with children do not suggest that these people were given humanitarian consideration or mercy. Of greatest concern, rather, was the child's survival. We have at our disposal sales documents that refer to women with children of one year, a year and a half, and two years old (PMA: vol. 3, no. 152, no. 224; vol. 5, no. 29).

Ten documents involve the sale of children without their mothers. They were children either imported from Africa with no mother, or born in Portugal or Seville to a slave. From the perspective of these children, their fate in both situations was dramatic and similar. The circumstances in which children were sold and their owners' motives differed. In the town books of Seville, we find information about the sale in 1489 of a black slave named Maria, who was from Jahen in Castile, was about seven years old, and whose buyer came from the same town (PMA, vol. 2 no. 6). She had been born in Europe and all indications are that she had been torn away from her mother. But there is also the example of a 15-day-old baby sold in Seville in 1492 for the low price of 10 *real* in silver, the equivalent of about 340 *maravedi*, i.e., less than one ducat (PMA, vol. 2 no. 52). This was less than 10 per cent of the price of an adult slave (and also of a 'piece' made up of a mother and infant). Still, unusually valuable slaves could cost as much as 30 ducats.

Most of the children who were sold were several years old, they were raised by their mother, and the clear aim of the sale was profit. Some of these children had been born in Portugal (or in Castile). But one document speaks of nine-year-old Magdalena, sold in 1500 in Seville, where she had been born: *nascida en esta dicha cibidad*. The buyer had to pay 7,200 *maravedi* for her (PMA: vol. 3, no. 17). In another case, the document speaks directly about the separation of a child from its mother: in 1502, in Seville, the owner sold Catalina, a black slave woman from Guinea who was around 30 years old, and five-year-old Maria, the daughter of one of his other female slaves, Francisca (PMA: vol. 3, no. 139). Children born in Africa and separated from their mothers there were also sold. In 1492, a seven-year-old boy named Godin, born in the Wolof lands, was sold. The five-year-old Ysabel, an *esclavita* born in Guinea, was given as a pledge for her owner's debt (PMA: vol. 2, no. 54; similar information in PMA: vol. 2, no. 70 and 121; vol. 3, no. 48 and 202).

In the light of this material it does not seem that owners felt any inhibition or remorse in separating children from their mothers and selling them. Practical considerations were the deciding factor in the sale of mothers with infants. Economic considerations prevailed in the sale of older children. The telling

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and individual case of the sale of a 15-day-old infant without its mother was not motivated by a desire for profit, because the owner received a paltry sum. Perhaps the child's mother had died in childbirth, or it was a way to punish the mother – we will come back to this later.

We must also keep in mind the kind of source material we have at our disposal, and its limitations. Firstly, many cases in which young slave women were sold might have involved mothers being separated from their children, but this fact was not registered in the documents. Secondly, we do not know the number of cases in which the owner did not sell either the woman or her child, but kept them both for himself.

One indicator could be estate inventories that were drawn up after the death or bankruptcy of owners. For example, in 1489, the deceased Pedro Mexia left behind, among other possessions, a 30-year-old black female slave, Ynes, and her six-year-old son with light-colored skin (*de color loro*). And among Luis de la Mezquita's possessions, in 1495, were a 25-year-old black female slave, Pendra, and her two sons, each about four years old (PMA: vol. 2, no. 5 and 104). Neither of these owners had sold the mother, either alone or with children, though in both cases, the death or bankruptcy of the owner meant that the women and their children ran the risk of being separated. In the first case, it is possible that the father of the mulatto boy was the owner.

Cases of children of black slaves with lighter skin color are noted several times in our documents. In 1489, a 16-year-old slave with light skin color (*de color loro*), named Rodrygo, was sold in Seville; he was the son of one Catalina, a black slave who belonged to the seller (PMA: vol. 2, no. 7). Black female slaves could come into sexual contact with white owners under more or less overwhelming pressure, and their rape by owners was possible. Although they were slaves, because they were Christians rape was theoretically a forbidden act but in practice it usually went unpunished. There were, however, exceptions. In 1490, King João II pardoned the knight Álvaro de Vila Franca, a resident of Setúbal, married to Violante Afonso. He was accused of having a daughter with one of his slaves, a black Christian from Guinea. With the consent of his wife, he accepted the daughter into his home; that is, he probably legalized her in this way. His wife thus knew about the adultery and the defendant asked for mercy, which he received from the king, provided that this did not happen again (PMA: vol. 2, no. 23). It can be assumed that the accusation was a form of pressure from his wife and that without her efforts the case would not have been considered. But the facts remain that the knight's act was punishable, and slaves were given at least a minimum degree of protection. The wife's consent to bring a child born in such circumstances into their home reminds us that consent could also have been denied; in that case the infant might have

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been sold. The man could also – for different reasons – have decided to sell the baby.

Thus, after being clothed and baptized, given a name, taught the language and the rules of work, people brought from Africa were gradually assimilated into Portuguese society. Children born to slaves in Portugal inherited their mother's status but their place of origin, in Portuguese cities or in Castile, was noted. Children born in Portugal understood the language better than their mothers, but it was not correct Portuguese; rather it was a simplified and distorted version – *fala de Guiné* or *fala dos pretos,* and *fala dos negros* – that is, the speech of Guinea, the speech of blacks. According to historians of Portuguese literature, the first Portuguese work in which an author used this language was written as early as 1455. In the 16th century, such works were numerous, and the masterful control of such language and its use in theatre was characterized by the plays of Gil Vicente (Teyssier 1959; Russell 1995a; Saunders 1982: 99–101, 203, footnote. 66; Klave 1985: 120–122). In his comedies, common characters speak in a common tongue, and black slave characters speak *fala dos pretos*.

The use of this language in theatres had a comedic effect and related to the ordinary experiences of the audience. But through irony it could serve to humiliate and stigmatize the social group that used such speech. It is significant that Afonso Alvares, the 16th-century author of comedies and stage dramas, a mulatto by origin, never used *fala de Guiné* (Saunders 1982: 101; Klave 1985: 125). Perhaps, it would have been too painful for him. There were a few black slaves who used correct Portuguese, and they were defined by the distinct term *ladinhos* (Saunders 1982: 101), which also emphasized their exceptional situation. The most comprehensive overview of the emergence of the *língua de negro*, and of its influence on literature, theatre, music, the content of printed ephemera, and the press, all the way to the 19th century, is provided by José Ramos Tinhorão (2018: 203–440, 1st ed., 1988). Along with skin color, language was thus one of the features that distinguished slaves from other members of society. Both features were more durable than the slaves' legal status, since that could be abolished through manumission.

Manumission usually came as the result of a decision made by the owner. In some cases, however, a slave was entitled to manumission by law. A slave-interpreter who – during expeditions to Africa – obtained four slaves for his master was supposed to be freed. Ca da Mosto described this system in his account of his travels in 1455 and 1456 (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 77–78). But the oldest documented manumission of an interpreter recorded in the PMA comes from the year 1475 (PMA: vol. 1, no. 95). In 1477, João Garrido was freed; he was a black slave born in Guinea and was owned by the merchant Gonçalo Toscano, a resident of Lagos. This same João Garrido had been baptized and repeatedly

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traveled as an interpreter to the lands of Guinea. He could have become 'a Moor' and lived again as 'a Moor' (*viiver como mouro*), but he always returned to his master and to the Kingdom of Portugal. Thus – according to the document – he was a good and faithful servant. For these reasons, a royal official, by force of royal law and in the name of João II, recognized this slave as free:

> We then order [...] that the said Johão Garrido is liberated and free and we allow him to live and work in these Kingdoms as any other Portuguese Christian.
>
> Porem mandamos [...] que ajam o dicto Johão Garrido por forro e liure viido elle a estes regnos e o leixem em elles morar trautar como qualquer outro cristãao portuguees (PMA: vol. 1, no. 101; see also *Descobrimentos portugueses* 1944: vol. 3, 173–174, no. 132).

Services provided by slaves during expeditions to Africa were one of the most important reasons for their manumission. In 1499, King Manuel the Fortunate freed his slave Beatriz Gomez precisely for the services she had provided during her stay in São Jorge da Mina Castle (PMA: vol. 2 no. 239). In 1510, Manuel de Gois addressed a letter to the king asking for his consent to free a slave named Fernão Avila, who had been sent to the Kingdom of Benin as an interpreter to work alongside a Portuguese agent. Fernão had remained in Benin for three years working on behalf of Portugal (PMA: vol. 5 no. 180). Sometimes, the king freed a slave on the condition that he provide services in Guinea. The first known such document comes from 1454, which is, of course, very early. In this case, King Afonso V freed Fatima, mentioned earlier, a female Moor from *terra de Arzique* (PMA: vol. 1 no. 11).

A frequently cited reason for manumission was the slave's sincere religious faith. In a different context, I quoted the example of Pero Negro, who fled to Morocco but then returned because he felt himself to be a Christian. The manumission of the interpreter João Garrido was justified as much by the sincerity of his faith as by his services in Guinea. In 1492, King João II freed the slave Catarina, who had been brought from Guinea by the merchant Bartolomeo Marchionni when she was eight years old and sold to a Jewish merchant from Lisbon, named Guedelha Guoaliter. After two years, Catarina was baptized in the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene and served Bartolomeo Marchionni as a free person. A court case arose between the two merchants. The King settled the dispute by freeing Catarina. The justification was her faith (PMA: vol. 2 no. 46). This event provides evidence of the anti-Jewish sentiments and actions in Portugal at the end of the 15th century – that is, in the period when Jews who

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did not convert to Christianity were being expelled from the kingdom. Although the ban on Jews and Muslims owning Christian slaves already existed, the law was only truly enforced at the end of the century (Saunders 1982: 62–63).

Manumission could also be an expression of the religious devotion of the owner and his desire to perform an act pleasing to God. In Seville's notarial register under the date 13 February 1503, there is a record documenting the manumission by a monk, Lope Mexia, of a black slave woman named Catalina, 14 years old, *por memoria de la pasyon de nuestro Señor Jesu Christo* – and, it adds, *e por servicios*. This same monk on the same day freed a 14-year-old Canarian named Pedro on the condition that for five years he would serve Teresa Mexia, probably from the same family as the monk. This was thus a manumission secured by a hard and long obligation. Eight days after those manumissions, on 21 February 1503, the same benefactor, defined specifically as *frey Lope Mexia, comendador de la orden de Sancti Spiritus*, freed a black woman from Guinea named Catalina, also 14 years old, because this slave *es cristiana como por los muytos, buenos y leales servicios que le ha fecho* (PMA: vol. 3, nos. 181, 182 and 184). Another slave, also named Catalina but 40 years old, was released in 1494 because – according to her owner:

> she served me for many years […] and performed many good and loyal services every day […] to my satisfaction and gratitude.
>
> me aveys servido de mucho tiempo […] e me aveys fecho, e fesedes de cada un dia muchos, e buenes e leales servicios […] e servis a mi contento et gracia (PMA: vol. 2 no. 100).

Similar wording is found in a document from 1495 regarding the services of a 40-year-old slave named Elena. In 1497, the manumission was documented of Catalina, a 30-year-old slave, *por servicios e porque es christiana* (PMA: vol. 2 no. 119, 168). Thus, the three main reasons given in the documents for manumission are the slave's sincere Christian faith, good service, and exceptional merits. One can, of course, assume that these items of information were the product of a standard form, but – no matter how schematic – they reflected the intentions of the master. In any case, some of the documents are full of comprehensive and detailed descriptions of the slaves' actions and achievements.

The fourth reason for manumission, about which the texts are silent, was to get rid of an old or sick person. Sometimes, the mention of faithful service obscured this more complex, even cruel reality. In 1493, Mahomed – a black slave who was about 60 years old – was freed (PMA: vol. 2 no. 61). He kept his Muslim

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name and thus the Muslim faith which, in this case, did not prevent manumission. He was praised for his services, but manumission at such an advanced age was more like abandonment. After all, it freed the owner from the obligations and benefits owed by him to a slave. Other cases of such an abandonment of slaves who were old or sick are given by Saunders (Saunders 1982: 141). Arlindo M. Caldeira devotes a separate section of his book to the slaves' old age and death. The majority of the materials and examples he uses date from the second half of the 16th century to the 18th century (Caldeira 2017: 373–383).

It was also possible for a slave to be freed under the obligation of continued service, or to buy his or her own freedom. In 1504, Pedro Pinelo, a canon of the Cathedral of Seville, transferred to Diego Osorio his rights over the slave Leonor and her two daughters – Luzia and Andrea. Leonor obligated herself and her daughters to serve the canon and pay him, in exchange for manumission, the sum of 11,000 *maravedi* (PMA: vol. 3 no. 223).

Another exceptional act of manumission in Seville occurred in 1501. Here, Elvira Rodriguez, a free black woman and resident of Seville, entered her testament into the town book. She commended her soul to God and to the Virgin Mary, and wanted to be buried in the Church of St John. Then, she stated that she would free Juana Rodriguez, her black female slave who was 20 years old, *porque es christiana e por servicios que le ha fecho*.... This passage in the entry, which sounds quite formulaic, was complemented by a very personal declaration: Elvira made the liberated Juana her heir *por servicios que le ha fecho e amor que le tyene* (PMA: vol. 3 no. 64).

In acts of manumission, certain wording is repeated (probably entered according to the form), which refers to the freedoms and rights due to those liberated: to reside, to travel, to undertake various activities. This was most clearly expressed in a passage from a document of the year 1477 – the freedman could live in the kingdom 'as any other Portuguese Christian.'

In 1490, King João II issued a document regarding Isabel Anes, the widow of Fernão Rebelo, a black resident of Lisbon. The king granted her the privileges due to widows of those who had served in Guinea. The document uses the words *aas veuvas molheres de nossos vasallos* (PMA: vol. 2 no. 20). Rebelo thus had all the rights of a free person; he was described as a vassal of the king, and he had married a Portuguese woman, all of which illustrates his integration into local society.

Evidence for such an interpretation is also provided by employment contracts for black freedmen as soldiers. In 1500, in Seville, a black man, Anton Mexia from the St Lawrence parish, served as *lanceiro* for the pay of 34 *maravedi* a day. In the same year, the black man Andrés Mexia, a resident of Seville's St Vincent parish, entered into an agreement to serve as a crossbowman

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(*ballestero*) for 35 *maravedi* a day (PMA: vol. 3 no. 8, 14). In 1501, Juan López, a black resident also of Seville's St Vincent parish, and Esteban Marfin – (*lavrador*) presumably an agricultural worker – together contracted a loan for 970 *maravedi* from Pedro de Nieblo, a resident of Seville in the parish of Santa Maria (PMA: vol. 3 no. 62). In the case of freedmen, entries contain information about the place of residence (*visinho de …*) and parish (*en la colacion de …*), regardless of skin color. These entries reflect the integration of black freedmen into the urban community of Seville.

Another type of entry in the town books were authorizations granted by free black people of African descent to representatives chosen by them (PMA: vol. 3 no. 111, 112/1501). The question arises whether the situation in Portugal was similar to that reflected in documents from Castile, and above all Seville. Evidence could be provided by an entry in the town books from 1502. Here, Bartolomé de Pinos, a black freedman and auxiliary sailor (*grumete*) from the parish of San Juan in Seville, empowered a black sailor and resident of Lisbon, João Gonçalves, to collect all the debts owed to this *grumete* by Portuguese ship owners and builders for work done on the ships sailing to Guinea (PMA: vol. 3 no. 177).

The documents cited here show the variety of issues and activities that involved free black residents of Seville and Lisbon. They had the right to appear before courts and city offices, to borrow money, to represent other people, and to give and receive authorization. Among them were sailors, soldiers, agricultural workers, and interpreters. They worked and lived in Seville and Lisbon. As members of caravel crews, they travelled to Guinea. They all were – and this was obvious to their contemporaries – Christians. In the documents, their names were given (sometimes their surnames), skin color, city, neighborhood, and the parish to which they belonged. In contrast to those entries that involved slaves, never once was their place of origin in Africa entered. After all, the place of origin of free blacks was the city in which they lived and worked and where the laws covered them.

Judging from the conduct of the free black Portuguese and Castilians who went to Guinea and returned to Portugal and Castile, we can conclude that they had accepted their fate. They adopted the religion, language (whether in the form of *fala dos pretos* or pure Portuguese) and customs; they learned various skills and professions; and they could marry. But one must clearly keep in mind that only a clearly small minority of slaves was ever freed. The documents do not allow us to investigate what parts of, and to what extent, African customs and culture were maintained by these people. This is all the more true when it comes to the majority who remained in captivity until the end of their lives. We can presume that the degree to which they assimilated, and the

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degree to which they accepted the fundamental change in their fate, and above all slavery itself, was much less than in the case of freedmen.

Along with slavery, the principal change in the lives of Africans taken to Portugal was their separation from their family and close relatives. Africans must have felt this loss acutely, especially since their culture was characterized by the specific role played by the extended family and clan ties. Slavery was accompanied by the loss, for the person being abducted, sold and bought, of the people closest to him or her – children, parents, spouses, and other relatives. Zurara's chronicle provides poignant evidence of this, quoted earlier in this book. This practice went hand in hand with slavery over the following centuries with unchangingly tragic consequences (Meillassoux 1986: 101–106). In Africa, the locals had lived surrounded by a great number of people who were close to them. Suddenly, in Portugal, they were alone. Young slave women did bear children, but they lived near the owner's family, which was alien to them, and in constant fear of separation from their offspring. The fact that black Africans attached great importance to knowing someone to whom they felt close is eloquently reflected in Elvira Rodriguez's testament, quoted above, when – liberating her slave – she added: *por... amor que le tyene*.

Some of the slaves who lived in Portugal could find a sense of community in religious confraternities (Tinhorão 2018: 144–161, 1st ed. 1988; Fonseca 2000: 211–214). The most extensive discussion of this phenomenon, for the period from the end of the 15th century to the 19th century, is provided by Didier Lahon, who dedicated the second volume of his work to confraternities, especially those that functioned in Lisbon (Lahon 2001: 376–789; see also Lahon 1999: 58–70). António Brásio (1944) first drew attention to rosary confraternities, and dated the establishment of such an organization for black people (Confraria do Rosario para Pretos) at the Dominican monastery in Lisbon to 1496. Lahon did not find confirmation for this in the sources, but assumed that the confraternity based at this monastery began to receive freedmen and slaves at the turn of the 15th century. A separate rosary confraternity for the black inhabitants of Lisbon was established in 1565 at this monastery (Lahon 2001: 392nn, table 471). This view is shared by Tinhorão (2018: 153–160).

One of the most telling testimonies to the black slaves' complicated psychological condition is Albrecht Dürer's magnificent portrait of 20-year-old Katherina, a black slave in the service of João Brandão, the Portuguese king's envoy in Antwerp (see fig. 19). Dürer met her and drew her portrait in 1521. The young woman is shown in modest, yet becoming attire, as demanded by the standing of her owner. One can presume that she was free of need in the material sense. But it is the expression on Katherina's face that drew the attention of the artist and, through his work, engages the viewer. It is an unusual combination of

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contemplation, sadness, melancholy, and loneliness. The young woman seems for a moment disconnected from reality and her thoughts seem to revolve around something distant and inaccessible (Massing 1991: 115–119; Earle, Lowe, eds. 2005: 152–153). The portrait brings to mind the words of Zurara, that 'every man wishes to be free' and Paul Kaplan's comment, that 'Dürer's work is breathtaking' (Kaplan 2005: 154).

The longing for their homeland and relatives must have weakened over the years as slaves gradually came to terms with their fate as people reduced to slavery. In most cases, assimilation was inevitable. However, a description of northwest Africa by Valentim Fernandes is thought-provoking. Writing about the Azeneg on the Atlantic coast, their customs and their poverty, and about their abduction by the Portuguese in the 1440s, Fernandes added:

> I knew, for example, a certain Azenegue captured as a child and raised in Portugal, where he lived as a Christian for 24 years. Then, he ran away and returned to his land, where he lives now – deprived of everything, naked, as poor as the others, maybe even poorer, because he is not able to do anything. He lives on alms given to him by others [Azenegues]. He could live better, have good clothes, but his nature did not allow him this.
>
> [...] conheçi huum Azenegue que foy tornado em pequeno e criado e christão em Portugal 24 annos, e fugio e foy ter a sua terra e viue assi desnudo e desauenturado pobre e muyto mais que os outros, porque non sabe trabalhar e viue de esmolla dos outros onde bem podera viuer melhor e ter booms vestidos, porem a naturaleza ho non leixou (Fernandes 1938: 122; *Códice* 1997: 54).

Intercultural contact depends, among other things, on the number of people establishing contact on either side, and on the freedom or compulsion to do so. In the case of slaves, it was compulsion and the lack of any alternative. This applies also in large measure to the freedmen: even if they could leave Portugal and so sever the ties that bound them, this was something that proved very difficult to do in practise. Cultural contact was unequal, given that Africans represented from one to three per cent of the population in Portugal (with up to 10 per cent of the population in some cities). Moreover, Portuguese culture was of a relatively uniform character, whereas African slaves belonged to many different cultures and language groups.

Portuguese sources reflect a deep conviction in the superiority of Christian culture and the determination that slaves who had been brought from Africa should be baptized and induced into accepting a European lifestyle. The

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material collected here indicates that this objective was largely achieved, at least when it came to the external manifestations of assimilation. This conduct and thinking applied also to the residents of Seville and those parts of Castile that remained in close commercial relationship with Portugal. In the texts, however, there is no direct mention of the reverse effects of contact – that is, the transformation of Portuguese culture. Probably, until the beginning of the 16th century, most of the Portuguese did not think about or perceive this phenomenon. It was significantly weaker than the assimilation and acculturation of black Africans. This was due to where the contacts took place (in Europe), and the greater affluence and attractiveness of Christian civilization – something that the Portuguese took for granted.

For the Portuguese, life in their own kingdom with a relatively large group of Africans, mainly concentrated in the towns, was a matter of everyday existence. A great deal was known about these Africans. Certain information was widely circulated, including the place in Africa from which a slave had come. People were able to distinguish amongst black Africans based on their place of origin. Despite baptism, African names remained in use in some cases. Sexual contact, voluntary or forced, brought about the emergence of a group of mulattos. The language used by Africans was a simplified form of Portuguese. Its use gave rise to ridicule and irony, as reflected in the literature of the time. Beyond skin color and slavery itself, language was one element that marked the human, relegating him or her to a low status in society. At the same time, Christianity functioned as a force for the integration of black slaves into society.

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CHAPTER 10

Degredados, Lançados, Tangomaos – Portuguese Exiles and Fugitives

Accounts about Portuguese men who settled in Africa appeared at the turn of the 15th century. Valentim Fernandes, writing about the Casamansa River and the local Mandingo ruler, stated:

> in the house of this king there are many Portuguese Christians who live there for some time – they are merchants who trade with those Negroes.
>
> Em casa deste rey ha muytos christãos portugueses estãtes mercadores que tractã cõ aquelles Negros (Fernandes 1951: 58; *Códice* 1997: 89).

Similar information can be found in the passage about trade settlements on the São Domingo River (later called Cacheu):

> the inhabitants of this region call themselves Banhiis […] ships from the Cape Verde Islands arrive there in order to trade in cotton to sew *pagnes* [a short vesture covering the body from the waist to the knees – MT], just as the travel to the Casa Mansa region. Christian merchants live there.
>
> O pouo desta terra se chama Banhiins […], per aqui vem os nauios da ilhas do Cabo Verde pera fazer ho resgate do seu algodõ pera pãnos assi como em Casa Mansa e aqui estam christãos mercadores estantes (Fernandes 1951: 68; *Códice* 1997: 93-Bahüns).

According to Fernandes, those Portuguese were not temporary arrivals, but inhabitants of both regions and worked as trade intermediaries between Europeans and Africans. Fernandes used the word *estantes*, which can be understood as 'sojourning permanently.' In this case the word *residentes* would have been more appropriate. On the other hand, the said *estantes* were not, according to the text, incidental visitors. They had been living among Africans for some time. The existence of these settlers must have been a well-established phenomenon at the time Fernandes's work was written, since they had, by then, regulated their relations with the local rulers and chiefs.

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One of Fernandes's important informers, mentioned in the text, was Álvaro Velho do Barreiro. He gave his testimony to Fernandes in about 1507, following an eight-year stay in West Africa. He was most probably a sailor or soldier who had participated in Vasco da Gama's expedition to India, but who had left the expedition for unknown reasons and disembarked somewhere near the Bijagos (Bissagos) Islands. He had spent the said eight years in various regions on the Guinea Coast from the Gambia to Sierra Leone, where he engaged in trade. As a former settler, he was a very competent informer following his return to Portugal (Fernandes 1951: 85, 103, 175–176, footnote 197). The first document that details attempts to flee to Africa dates from the 15th century, and more numerous accounts of individual fugitives from Portugal who settled in Africa come from the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. I will discuss them further on in this chapter.

Another interesting testimony to the presence of Portuguese men in Africa is a document dated 17 December 1514. It states that Gonçalo Lopes, who spent three years in Guinea in the service of the king of Portugal, drew up a financial report from this period. Among the sums he had collected was 31,300 reals owed by people who 'went to Sierra Leone and lived among the Negroes' (Blake 1967: no. 31, pp. 115–116; the document is at the Torre de Tombo archive. I had access only to the English translation in Blake's edition). Most probably the presence of these people in Sierra Leone was not yet permanent or irreversible. It was, however, long-lasting. The first, temporary Portuguese settlers in Africa did not sever their dependence on Portuguese royal power. They settled in places to which ships came most often, and mediated for a few years, after which they returned home. As early as 1480, Delafosse mentioned a 'large port' in Sierra Leone (Delafosse-Escudier: 38; Hair 1987: 171–172, footnotes 3 and 4). Others lived in African riverbank settlements, near marketplaces. Philip J. Havik, in turn, places the beginnings of the newcomers' settlements (*tabankas*) scattered on the coast of present-day Guinea-Bissau and on the lower parts of the local rivers in the late 15th and early 16th centuries (Havik 2004:13–14, 40, 84). Eugenia Herbert wrote about the adaptation of the Portuguese to trade conditions in Africa from Guinea to Angola (Herbert 1974).

The log of the ship *Santiago* pertaining to a trade expedition in 1526 recounts the activities of Portuguese settlers in two regions in which the crew traded: these were an area located along the São Domingos River and along the coast of Sierra Leone. Both areas were home to 'white people' (*homens brancos*), who are mentioned in the log by name and surname. One could buy from them slaves, ivory, rice and, in Sierra Leone, African iron, which was shipped to São Domingos (Mota 1969: 568–569, 571–573 – white people; 541, 568–569 – goods

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from Sierra Leone; 542, 571–573 – goods in São Domingos; 557 – iron trade; Brooks 1993: 53).

As the above sources indicate, the Portuguese who came to West Africa to trade for the time of a short sea expedition met others who had settled on the coast of Guinea for several years or permanently and who played the role of intermediaries. Although details of the earliest fugitives can be found from the middle of the 15th century, it became a noticeable phenomenon from the turn of that century. We don't know with absolute certainty what led some people to change their life so fundamentally, and how they managed to get the local rulers, chiefs and village communities to accept their presence there. We can, however, identify several general causes.

From the very earliest Portuguese expeditions, the interests and attitudes of the participants varied greatly. Commanders and knights yearned for fame, glory and booty, whereas merchants sought trade benefits. Ordinary expedition members could count on neither fame nor profit. On many occasions they sought to shorten the expedition and return to Portugal. The most telling example of such differing interests was the pressure exerted by the caravel crew on Ca da Mosto, which forced him to cut his first expedition short (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 91). Of course, discipline was maintained on the caravels and openly opposing either the captain or the organizer of the expedition was fraught with risks and, therefore, relatively rare. There were other, indirect, ways of resisting, like escaping from the caravels. But flight was ill-advised in the earliest period of the expeditions, which was a time of combat and enmity between Europeans and Africans. Runaways risked immediate death. From the time peaceful trade had been established with the Africans, the situation changed, and fleeing became a more viable possibility.

Portuguese sources mention several categories of people who became runaways and settlers. They were firstly exiles, called *degredados*. Being exiled to Africa was considered a severe and harsh form of punishment. At times, it was meted out *in lieu* of capital punishment. For example, from a document dated 12 May 1490, we know that João II commuted Gomes Aires's death sentence to lifelong banishment to São Tomé (PMa: vol. 2, no. 22). Exile as a form of punishment first appears in Portuguese documents as soon as a convenient location in Africa was secured, which was controlled by royal officials, making such exile possible. In the 1470s, the most common place of exile was the Cabo Verde Islands, which had been discovered in the mid 1450s (Mota 1947; 1972: 173–174, 180; Leite 1958: 281–285). The attribution of the discovery of Cabo Verde Island to Ca da Mosto or to Diogo Gomes is discussed by Raymond Mauny (Gomes 1959: 67–71, footnote 81; Leitão 1961: 12 *et seq.*). The main work that discusses the history of these islands is the one edited by Luis Albuquerque and Maria

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Emilia Madeira Santos (Albuquerque, Santos 1991; Santos 1995–2002; see also Andrade 1995). In 1466, King Afonso V granted the inhabitants of Santiago Island the privilege to engage in free trade on the Guinea Coast, all the way to Sierra Leone. The privilege excluded arms, iron, and ship-building equipment, trade in which was prohibited (PMA: vol. 1, no. 58 from 12 June 1466; Gavetas 1960: 28–32; Brásio 1958: 431–435; see also Boulègue 1987: 113). A settlement of several hundred people emerged on Santiago in the 1470s (MMA 1963: 76 *et seq*.; Mota 1978: 7; Horta 2000: 100–102; Torrão 1991). In 1472, King Afonso V renewed, with some limitations, the privilege to trade with the continent from Arguim to Sierra Leone (MMA 1958: 446–450; and PMA: vol. 1, no. 71 from 8 February 1472). The Cabo Verde Islands became an important trade center.

Cases of exile to the island of Santiago are corroborated in the collection of *Portugaliae Monumenta Africana* (PMA) documents, beginning in 1472 (PMA: vol. 1, no. 76 from 6 August 1472, no. 77 from 14 October 1472, no. 97 from 27 January 1476, no. 98 from 14 March 1476 – acts of grace of King Afonso V for *degredados* sent to the Cabo Verde Islands; see also PMA: vol. 2, no. 13 – 1490, no. 41 – 1491, vol. 3, no. 102 – 1501). However, the discovery in 1471 of the uninhabited island called São Tomé changed the principal destination for exiles. This took place gradually, as efforts were made after 1485 to settle the island and to establish a sugar cane plantation and a sugar production center there. The labor force on São Tomé was made up of African slaves who were overseen by royal officials, while supervision of the plantations was entrusted to ordinary Portuguese. The difficult climate and resulting high mortality among the Europeans led to an unceasing demand for Portuguese settlers, many of whom were *degredados*. The first exiles mentioned in the PMA date from 1488 (PMA: vol. 1, no. 212 from 10 June 1488 – act of grace of King João II for the an exile to São Tomé; see also PMA: vol. 2, no. 22, 28, 30 – 1490, no. 51 – 1492, no. 127, 128, 130 – 1496, no. 195 – 1497, no. 249 – 1499; vol. 3, no. 7 – 1500, no. 59, 61, 81, and 86 – 1501, vol. 5, no. 10 – 1505). People were also exiled to the castle of São Jorge da Mina, which was built in 1482. Women were exiled there, too, but in very small numbers.

Not only documents, but also descriptive sources mention the *degredados* in West Africa. According to the chronicles of Garcia de Resende and Rui de Pina, and the description by Valentim Fernandes, in 1493 King João II turned over the administration of the island of São Tomé to captain Álvaro de Caminha. The latter was accompanied voluntarily by a number of artisans. In addition, the king exiled 2,000 Jewish children there. Many of them died on account of the terrible climate. At the time when Fernandes wrote his text (1506–10), nearly 600 Jews remained alive and had grown to be young men and women by then. The captain married them to one another, but the white

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women married to white men fell pregnant with difficulty, whereas mixed unions were fertile (Fernandes 1951: 118; Mauny 1949; Małowist 1969a: 401 *et seq.*). In describing the differentiation of the population of São Tomé, Avelino Teixeira da Mota called the island 'a true human laboratory' (Mota 1978: 11).

In other parts of the African coast, some of the *degredados* were Jews, or so-called new Christians (*cristãos novos*) (Boulègue 1987: 117; Thornton 1998: 60–61; Mark, Horta 2011). A number of *degradados* from each of the above-mentioned locations – the Cabo Verde Islands, the island of São Tomé, and the castle of São Jorge da Mina – managed to escape the jurisdiction of the captains, who represented royal authority, and settled, according to the sources, 'among the Negroes' (*com os Negros*). This could not have been an easy decision. It could be taken only by people who had grown accustomed to the climate and who, during the course of a long stay in Africa, had become acquainted with the rules to be followed in contact and trade with the Africans. Only on those conditions could they act autonomously.

The inhabitants of São Tomé maintained regular trade with Portugal and the African coast, from the Congo, Benin, Mina, Sierra Leone, and the estuaries and basins of the rivers São Domingos and Gambia, to the Senegal River (Małowist 1969a: 232–234, 398 *et seq.*, 461 *et seq.*; 1969b; Vogt 1973). There was therefore plenty of opportunity to run away from the island. It was possible to hide on a ship or to bribe the crew to reach the mainland. Such secretly arranged escapes are mentioned only indirectly in the sources. In 1496, the king pardoned the *degredado* named Afonso Salvado, who had been exiled to the island of São Tomé and who had reported a conspiracy to rebel by other *degradados*, thanks to which the revolt was crushed at the outset (PMA: vol. 2, no. 127 from 12 January 1496). Incidentally, the rebels undoubtedly intended to take over the ship and set course for the mainland, as they could hardly remain on the island and await the response of the Portuguese authorities. Those were isolated incidents, however.

The majority of the Portuguese settlers who lived in Africa beyond the reach of royal officials were not *degredados* but free persons. They also ran away from ships, where living standards were low and dangers very high. Ordinary sailors and their helpers could improve their lot by means of occasional petty trade conducted on their own account. Caramansa, in a 1482 conversation with Azambuja, mentioned ragged Portuguese individuals who were glad to obtain anything they were offered. In time, such petty trade could lead to systematic benefits. Simultaneously, those who engaged in it gained experience. The customs book from 1504–1505 contains information about ordinary sailors, and even their helpers (*grumetes* – auxiliary sailors or people of African origin and

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mulattos in Portuguese service), who brought carved ivory spoons back to Lisbon.

Having amassed some modest resources and gained a little experience, those traders could consider fleeing and engaging in independent trade activities unburdened by dues, taxes, or payments on behalf of the royal treasury. If they intended to trade in prohibited merchandise, such as arms and iron, they could count on far greater profits, but had to act beyond the reach of the Portuguese authorities and did so risking their life in case of capture (Gomes 1959: 53, 55; Blake 1967: 203; PMA: vol. 1, no. 15, 16, 20, 80, 115, 129; PMA: vol. 2, no. 55; Mark, Horta 2011: 107–108). Runaways came from Portugal and from the Cabo Verde Islands. J. Blake considers that they were mostly poor people who were seeking to improve their lot (Blake 1967: 28; Brooks 1993: 124).

Escapes from ships began quite early in the history of African expeditions, shortly after the fighting had ceased and trade relations had been established. In 1456, the king Afonso V pardoned the sailor Rui Laurenço Rexia, an inhabitant of Lagos, who had been imprisoned for some criminal act and who had managed to escape from jail and attempted to flee on a caravel sailing for Guinea. He was captured, however, and made to stand trial (PMA: vol. 1, no. 21 from 22 June 1456). This brings us to yet another motive for running away to Africa: the desire to escape punishment for committed crimes. In 1463, Gonçalo Grumete (this could be a surname or a term used to denote an African serving as a sailor, or an auxiliary function on a ship) fled to the Cabo Verde Islands from a caravel returning from Guinea. More about the use of the word *grumete* and the evolution of its meaning on the West African coast has been written by Brooks (2003: 49, 53), Havik (2004: 358 – glossary), and Mendes (2012: 182–184). Supposedly, Gonçalo had committed some crime in Guinea and was being taken to Portugal to stand trial. Afonso V gave this fugitive's confiscated good to Soeiro da Costa, a courtesan of the Infante Pedro (PMA: vol. 1, no. 50 from 10 December 1463). Information about the escape to Guinea is found in a document from 1484, an act of grace from João II for fugitives from jail who had fled to Guinea (PMA: vol. 1, no. 153 from 29 June 1484).

The runaways were not necessarily poor people, criminals, or prisoners fleeing their place of captivity. They could also be people who were seeking a change of life, risk-takers, and adventurers. The desire for potent and unusual experiences and the prospect of great profits could draw free persons who were unconcerned with threat or poverty. Perhaps Álvaro Velho do Barreiro, the future informant of Valentim Fernandes, was such a person. Perhaps one of them was also Guilherme, a tax and duty collector (*requeredor*) from Madeira, mentioned in a document from 1500 (PMA: vol. 3, no. 45 from 30 August 1500).

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Runaways tore themselves abruptly from their former lives. But there were also cases of the gradual lengthening of a person's sojourn in Africa. A stay for official reasons would be prolonged, or the place of stay would be subject to change and dependence on royal officials loosened. Some settlers ended up breaking such dependence definitely, whereas others returned to royal authority. Álvaro Velho do Barreiro did so after an eight-year sojourn in Africa.

Escapes became frequent and more numerous as trade contact intensified. The ship's log of the *Santiago* shows that during a single voyage, in 1526, two sailors fled to the São Domingos River. This fact was noted, but without any surprise, as such escapes were not seen as anything out of the ordinary. The captain of the *Santiago* – a royal ship, it should be remembered – traded systematically with the Portuguese who had settled permanently in Sierra Leone and by the São Domingos River, and paid no attention to their illegal status (Mota 1969: 574 – flight of two sailors; 568–569, 571–573 – trade with white settlers in Africa). While such incidental information is not backed by any precise figures, we know that the result of such escapes was the consolidated settlement of Portuguese runaways in West Africa, particularly along the Gambia and Senegal rivers, along the rivers Casamansa, São Domingos (Cacheu), and Rio Grande (Geba), and on the Sierra Leone coast. The literature concerning those fugitives – called *lançados* – is quite extensive (Boxer 1961: 115–117; 1963: 9–11, 52; 1969: 31, 32, 388, 391; Małowist 1969a: 309–310, 366, 381, 533–538, 549–550; Silva 1970; Rodney 1970: 74–94, 202–204; Curtin 1975: 95–100; Mota 1976; 1978; 7–8; Brooks 1993: *passim*, especially 188–196; Boulègue 1989; Newitt 1992; Gadecki 2014a, 2014b).

The concern around the growing scale of these settlements was reflected in the efforts made by Portuguese rulers to limit their scope through prohibitions and heavy fines. King Manuel the Fortunate confiscated the property of runaways if they left any behind in Portugal. Documents testifying to such confiscations began to appear at the turn of the 15th century. One such document from 13 August 1500 is an act of donation for the benefit of merchant João de Castro, to whom the king gave the confiscated goods of nobleman Gonçalo de Paiva. The latter had borrowed a caravel a year earlier and sailed for the Cabo Verde Islands and Guinea. He had illegally traded in iron with the African inhabitants of Sierra Leone and in the lands of the Mandingo. This document is considered to be the first about the runaways (*lançados*), although the term itself does not appear in it. The document says that this person 'traded with the Negroes, and went there despite our prohibitions and dispositions' – *resgatou aos Negros imdo em ello comtra nostra defesa e ordenançam* (PMA: vol. 3, doc. from 13 August 1500).

In turn, in the document from 30 August 1500 concerning Guilherme, and another from 18 May 1505, the term *lançar*, meaning 'to flee' or even to

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'precipitate' oneself, is used (PMA: vol. 3, no. 82; PMA: vol. 5, no. 13). In the second of these documents, the king presented his courtesan with 30 *alquires* (here, a measure of volume equal to 13–22 liters) of wheat from the mill that had previously been owned by Diogo Pereira. The latter lost his mill because:

> He fled to Sierra, and settled there among the Blacks, where he had already been for three years, dealing in trade despite our prohibition.
>
> [...] se lançara na Serra com os negros honde andave rresgantado ha bem tres annos contra nossa defesa (PMA: vol. 5, no. 13).

On the strength of a document dated 5 January 1508, the king gave the Todos os Santos (All Saints') Hospital in Lisbon all the goods of Christians who had run away from the island of Santiago in the Cabo Verde archipelago to Sierra Leone. This document makes use of a similar wording concerning 'people who departed, and went to Guinea and settled among the Negroes' – *homens que se lamçam em Guine com os negros* (PMA: vol. 5, no. 92 from 5 January 1508). In an abridged version of this document, published by Maria de Graça Garcia Nolasco da Silva, the confiscation concerns 'the entire property of those Christians who go (as) *lançados* to Sierra Leone' – *todas as fazenda de quellas pessoas christãos que andão lançados na Serra Lioa* (Silva 1970: 519–520).

In an act of pardon dated 14 November 1508, the king gave a courtier (a squire – *escudeiro*) the goods of a certain Antonio Correa,

> an inhabitant of our town of Tavilla, who has left the realm to go to Sierra Leone and launched himself among the Negroes and remained and traded there for a couple of years and died there [...] and who, by launching himself there in this manner among the Negroes, has forsaken his entire property.
>
> Antonio Correa morador que foy em esta nossa villa de Tavilla se fora destes nossos regnos a Serra Leoa e la se lamçara com os negros e amdara certos annos tractamdo e resgatamdo ate que se la finou [...] E que porquanto elle por bem de se asi lamçar com os negros perdia toda sua fazemda (PMA: vol. 5, no. 120 from 14 November 1508).

Neither the miller Diogo Pereira, nor the said Antonio Correa, nor Guilherme the tax collector were poor people, and the motive of their flight was not misery.

In the *narratio* of another document – issued on 25 September 1509 – ' numerous white people' are named who had lived in Sierra Leone and died

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there (*muitos homens brancos, que ja são falecidos*), and whose property after their death fell to the royal treasury. The king decided, as an exception, to give half of this property to two settlers who were officially living in Sierra Leone, while the second half he granted to All Saints' Hospital in Lisbon (PMA: vol. 5, no. 167). And so, during the first decade of the 16th century, the king primarily confiscated the property of his subjects who had unofficially settled in Sierra Leone, either before or after they had died.

The king renewed his injunction against settling in Africa in 1514, and moreover threatened to confiscate the ships that carried the runaways (MMA 1963: 89; Rodney 1970: 75). In addition, in 1517 the king introduced limitations to the previously free trade of the Cabo Verde Islands' merchants with Guinea (MMA 1963: 143; Blake 1967: 29, 124–125). But legal obstacles imposed on Cabo Verdeans from Santiago Island, and other legal merchants, to trade on 'the Rivers of Guinea' accelerated the instances of flight and led to an increase in the numbers of *lançados* (Torrão 1991; Soares 2000). A year later, the king went even further and issued, on 15 March 1518, an ordinance (*alvará*) in which he accused the runaways and the inhabitants of Santiago of depleting the revenues of the Crown treasury. Manuel the Fortunate allowed African rulers to kill Portuguese runaways and take possession of their property. If, however, the runaway voluntarily chose to return, only half of his property would be subject to confiscation and, as was previously the case, this would go to All Saints Hospital in Lisbon (MMA 1963: 149; Boulègue 1987: 118). The following year, the restrictive regulations and penalties were renewed (MMA 1963: 163).

The promulgation of successive dispositions and the multiplication of penalties points to a degree of powerlessness of the Portuguese Crown in combating the extent of flight. These regulations were difficult to introduce because the authority of royal officials did not extend to African territories, which were controlled by local rulers and chiefs, who favored the settlement of Portuguese runaways on their territories. Moreover, the runaways were useful as intermediaries not only to the Africans, but also to Portuguese merchants. Even the captain and crew members of the royal ship *Santiago* traded with 'white people' who had settled in Sierra Leone and on the banks of the São Domingos River. Such people were known by name and surname, yet no attempts were made to capture, much less to punish them.

The word *lançados* had gained currency by the early 16th century, a circumstance that also reflects the magnitude of the phenomenon. Another term – *tangomaos* – also gained usage in the 16th century. The etymology of this word is not as clear as that of *lançados* and is subject to dispute. It may have originated from the name of one of the secret associations of the African Temne/Sapi people who inhabited Sierra Leone and neighboring areas. This association,

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called *Simo*, controlled the *kola* nut trade. The *lançados*, who were most often intermediaries between Africans and the Portuguese but some of whom also engaged in trade, were co-opted into this association according to this etymology. Thus transformed, the term became the Portuguese *tangomaos*, a word used to define the *lançado*-renegade who had severed not only his subordinate relationship to the king, but also his ties with European customs and the Christian religion (Hair 1967: 49, 54; Brooks 1987: 286; Gadecki 2014a). Other theories link the Portuguese term for renegades with the African word *tangomas*, which had already been noted by Valentim Fernandes and which referred to a priestly clan among one of the peoples of Sierra Leone (Fernandes 1951: 102, footnote 196). This similarity between the ways the two words sound may be coincidental.

According to Malyn Newitt, *lançados* signified Portuguese people who lived among black Africans, while *tangomaos* was used in connection with those of them who had established families there (Newitt 2010: 232–233; Brooks 1993: 191). Paul Hair also stresses the fact that the *tangomaos* had established roots within the African communities.

The term *lançados* can be found in documents dating from the early 16th century, but the word *tangomaos* appears in them only sporadically. In the collection of documents covering the period 1508–1668, appended to the article of Maria Nolasco da Silva, the word *tangomaos* first appears in 1521 (Silva 1970: 526–527, doc. no. 8 from 17 February 1521). One can thus assume that it emerged and gained traction later than the word *lançados*, following the evolution of the phenomenon of flight and the runaways' inclusion into the life of African communities. In practise, in many texts of the second half of the 16th century and of the 17th century, the words *lançados* and *tangomaos* are used interchangeably, with no difference being made between them.

Extensive descriptions of the *tangomaos* and of their way of life first appeared in times that lie beyond the scope of this work, i.e., the second half of the 16th century and the 17th century. But the situation in the 17th century is indicative of the direction in which the situation and the culture of the runaways and their descendants evolved.

In about 1570, during his trade voyage to the Cacheu (São Domingos) River, André Alvares Almada, who originated from the Cabo Verde Islands, came into contact with the customs of the local intermediaries. They sealed commercial transactions by means of African ceremonies and by making offerings of chickens and dogs (Almada 1984: 21–32, about the trade on the Cacheu – Chapter 9, 76–95, ceremonies and spells – 89; see also Brooks 1993: 227).

The *tangomaos*' gradual estrangement from Christianity – ultimately leading to a complete break with the faith – can be seen in numerous reports and

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letters that were written by the Jesuits. Baltasar Barreira, who lived in Sierra Leone from 1605 to 1609, drew attention to the fact that the local Portuguese lived without any connection with the Church and 'without any mention of God' (Barreira 1972).

According to Jesuit reports of the early 17th century:

> The *tangomaus* are those who throw themselves (*lançados*) among the Blacks and who travel about in the interior to conduct this trade, and they are a sort of people who, although Portuguese by nation and Christian by religion and baptism, nevertheless live as if they were neither Portuguese nor Christian. For many of them go naked, and in order to get on better with the heathen of the land where they trade by appearing like them, they score their whole body with an iron blade, cutting until they draw blood and making many marks which, after they have been anointed with the juice of certain plants, come to resemble various designs, such as figures of lizards, snakes or any other creatures they care to depict. The *tangomaus* make their way through the whole of Guinea in this way, trading in slaves and buying them wherever they can obtain them (but) without inquiring into the moral position, that is, whether they have been enslaved justly or otherwise. The *tangomaus* live so forgetful of God and their salvation that they might be blacks themselves and the heathen of the land, for they spend 20 or 30 years of their lives without making a confession or bearing in mind any other form of life or any world other than this one [...] (Boxer 1961: 115; Brooks 1993: 191).

The above passage is cited by Nafafé in abridged form, but with the original Portuguese text in the footnote (Nafafé 2007: 147–148 and footnote 459). And so, during the course of the 16th century, the *lançados* and *tangomaos* and their descendants underwent a process of acculturation and gradual inclusion in the African communities in which they lived.

In their criticism of the *tangomaos*, the authors of the texts from the second half of the 16th and the 17th centuries, especially the Jesuits, stressed their departure from the faith or, at the very least, their lack of contact with chaplains. They wrote of their nakedness, their adoption of local magic practises and ceremonies, and scarifications, which almost certainly depicted ties to a specific clan or secret African association. Moreover, we find out from such texts that the *tangomaos* wore amulets and subjected themselves to circumcision. These critical texts make no mention of other aspects of the *tangomaos* culture – the knowledge of the Portuguese language, customs, and law. The authors most probably took those aspects for granted and thus made no

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mention of them. There is no doubt that it was only by retaining elements of Portuguese culture that the *tangomaos* and their descendants could successfully play the role of intermediaries in the Africans' trade and communications with the Portuguese.

A long sojourn among Africans was not the only source of the *tangomaos'* cultural duality. Their marriage with local women also played an important role in this respect. Among the many reasons why individuals fled to Africa is one that has not yet been mentioned: the desire to find a woman.

A *lançado* who settled among Africans stood a chance to achieve a lasting relationship with an African woman and, what's more, a relationship with a local woman made it easier for him to win the trust of the locals. Valentim Fernandes wrote of those Mandingo who lived on the Gambia, who customarily greeted merchants arriving to their villages by sending them women (Fernandes 1951: 40). The *lançados* thus had no difficulty in gaining a partner. Their wives played numerous useful roles in organizing trade. Above all, they were interpreters, at least until such time that their husbands learned the local language (or languages). These wives facilitated their husbands' understanding of African customs and laws and introduced them into the local community. They engaged in trade alongside their husbands (Herbert 1974: 413–417; Newitt 1992: 37–43; Horta 2000: 102 – in footnote 9, the author cites Teixeira da Mota's 1951 pioneering work in this respect; generally about assimilation processes, see Mouser 1975). In the second and successive generations, the *lançados* and *tangomaos* retained their knowledge of Portuguese, but also knew the local languages. They were a group of Luso-Africans with ties to both European and African culture and were conscious of their origins and distinct identity (Mark 1995, 1996, 2002; Horta 2000).

Local African rulers and chiefs needed the *lançados*' mediation and gave them protection. The *lançados* obtained permission from them to embark on trade trips into the interior and moved from market to market, buying goods that the Portuguese needed. In the case of mixed marriages, African rulers and chiefs allowed the *lançados* to use land in keeping with local customary law (Rodney 1970: 74–88; Brooks 1993: 189).

One of the better known *lançados* was Ganagoga, who lived in the second half of the 16th century. The chief of the settlement of Casão on the Gambia allowed him to set off on a trade voyage to 'Grand Fulo,' i.e., to Futa Toro (in the northeastern part of present-day Senegal), where he married the daughter of the local chief of the Fulbe people. This allowed him to travel 'throughout the interior of Guinea.' In reality, as Almada pointed out, Ganagoga was a 'new Christian' and his real name was João Ferreira. The name Ganagoga was given to him by the Africans. In the Beafares language, it meant 'he who speaks all

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languages' (Almada 1984: 23; Rainolds 1971: 12; Boulègue 1987: 120; Mark, Horta 2011: 67).

Subordination to local African rulers or chiefs also entailed obligations and limitations. Customarily, with the death of a *lançado*, the local ruler took over his property (Almada 1984: 117; Donelha 1977a: 129–131; Boulègue 1987: 120). We don't know if this custom also applied to *lançados* who had established families with local women. But the most precious inheritance bequeathed to the next generation was composed of trade experience, bi-culturalism, and bi- or multi-lingualism which allowed the second generation to become middlemen as well.

It is open to debate to what degree the situation of the *lançados* differed depending on their region of settlement. It is known that no *lançados* settled in Benin. The rulers of this centralized state appointed special officials for contacts with the Portuguese. Not only trade, but the arrivals themselves were strictly controlled and their places of stay were clearly defined. The main trade center was Gwato and the Portuguese were allowed into the capital only under strict control and in situations when Benin's political, military or trade interests required it (Bradbury 1957: 164 – map, 81; Ryder 1969: 30–31; Eisenhofer 2007a: 56). Contacts organized and supervised in this manner left no room for the emergence of independent Portuguese middlemen acting for their own benefit. For this reason, the life of Portuguese merchants and knights in Benin was of a different nature than that of the independent *lançados* in other areas of the West African coast.

Benin was the exception, however. Perhaps the situation was similar with the Akan people, whose states were located in the interior, to the north of the castle of Mina, and later with other fortresses and trade posts. But the *lançados* could not settle or trade there principally because of the proximity of the castle of São Jorge da Mina and its crew. Another factor of some significance was the competitive attitude of Mande merchants who came to Mina from the north, and did not allow the *lançados* to proceed deeper into the continent. On the other hand, a large proportion of the population of the settlements located around the fortresses and trade posts was made up of mulattos who – being bicultural and bilingual – played the role of middlemen, similarly to the *lançados*.

In most states of the West African coast, the entrenchment and centralization of power was weaker than in Benin, since their bureaucratic apparatus was not very extensive. The political structure at the level of chiefdoms was even more limited. In the territory of such states and chiefdoms, and within the framework of their organizational structures, there was room for middlemen such as the *lançados*.

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In the Senegambia region, it was the Wolof and Mande people who actively traded with the Portuguese. Among the Wolof, it was mostly those who were organized into the states of Cayor and Bawol. The Mande made up numerous chiefdoms – known by the name of *kafu* – on either banks of the Gambia and Casamansa rivers. Each chiefdom was in a loose dependence on Mali and its ruler, who appears in Portuguese sources as Bormelli (Gomes 1959: 39). In those sources one can find the following names of local rulers (*mansa*) and their *kafu*: Nomimansa (to the north of the estuary of the Gambia); Farisangul (a 'vassal' of Bormelli); Batimansa (to the north of the Gambia); Animansa (to the north of the Gambia's middle course); and Ulimansa (in the area of Cantor on the Gambia). Other chiefdoms were located by the Casamansa River, whose name derives from the terminology of power in the language of the Mandingo (the *mansa*-ruler) (Cissoko 1969: 325–336; Konare 1981: 132, 141–145).

Initially – as in the case with Ca da Mosto and Budomel (the ruler of Cayor) – trade was the business of the ruler himself. As contact became more frequent, rulers and chiefs ceded this responsibility – as well as that of collecting trade fees – to their representatives, who are referred to as *alcaides* in the Portuguese sources. The meaning of this term, which originated in the Muslim world and was well known to the Portuguese, was ultimately explained at the end of the 16th century by Alvares Almada, who wrote that: 'all those kings [i.e., the rulers and chiefs among the Wolof, Mandingo and Serer peoples] have *alcaides* who receive gifts from our merchants and buy goods that their kings need.' In the oral tradition and the contemporary language of the Wolof and Mandingo, that term is *alcati* (Boulègue 1987: 68–69, 115).

Trade with the Serer met with greater resistance and developed only later. These people created two eponymous chiefdoms around the areas of the Sine and Saloum rivers. Initially, the Serer, referred to by Ca da Mosto as the Barbacins, rejected all Portuguese offers to trade and sought to kill the arrivals (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 75–78). But at the turn of the 15th century, trade with the so-called Petite Côte – south of Cabo Verde, and on the banks of the Rio de Barbacins (Sine-Saloum) – had grown, so that the caravels would sail up the river into the hinterland for this purpose (Pacheco-Mauny: 61–67; Fernandes 1951: 29; Boulègue 1987: 129–130; Brooks 1993: 201–203).

The organizational structure of Wolof, Mande, and Serer chiefdoms and early states was not suited to the rapid development of trade with the Portuguese. Given the rapidly growing volume of trade, a single office of *alcaide* (*alcati*) proved inadequate. For this reason, as trade with the Wolof, Mandingo and Serer expanded, Portuguese middlemen – the *lançados* – appeared.

This was even more the case with peoples who had no chiefdoms, but lived in acephalous segmentary systems made up of separate villages ruled over by

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village chiefs, such as those peoples in the São Domingos (Cacheu) and Rio Grande (Geba) river basins and the lands of Sierra Leone. It is true that, in the 16th century, there were the *kafu* of the Mandingo and the state of Fulbe from Futa Djalon in the hinterland. But the coasts and river basin were inhabited by numerous peoples whose communities were decentralized. These peoples and their village chiefs also sought to control the trade with the Portuguese and to set up an organizational framework that allowed for the collection of tribute and customs fees. According to the log of the *Santiago* (1526), the transaction costs the Portuguese had to incur included so-called *dadivas*, i.e., customary presents. The captain of the *Santiago* gave such gifts in Sierra Leone and on the banks of the São Domingos River to chiefs of villages and small regions as well as to the port manager – *alcaide do porto* (Mota 1969: 547, 572). He gained their favor in this manner but conducted trade through the intermediary of the Portuguese middlemen who had settled in the area.

In his early, 1987 publication, George Brooks advanced the thesis that the settlement of the *lançados* could have grown especially in a decentralized political environment – particularly in São Domingo and in Sierra Leone (Brooks 1987: 278–279, 283–288, 293; Newitt 1992: 43). It is certain that the Portuguese settlers found favorable conditions there, and the need for their services was great. But sources pointing to the presence of the *lançados* and *tangomaos* in Senegambia, on the Petite Côte, by the Gambia and Casamansa rivers, clearly show that they were active in each of three different political milieus: in the early states of West Africa; in the chiefdoms; and in the village segmentary systems. They perhaps found particular advantages in the last milieu. For example, upon their death their families were not threatened with confiscation of property. Havik considers that the *lançados*, and later the Luso-Africans, were active in a great many different political milieus, 'not only "centralized" but also "segmentary" or "acephalous" communities' (Havik 2004: 19). In his later, 2003 work, Brooks in turn shows that the *lançados* settlement was related to areas of Mandingo settlement and to trade networks that had been created by different African groups (Brooks 2003: 19–20, 161–172). The process by which the *lançados*, and then the *tangomaos*, became Luso-Africans and Euro-Africans obviously exceeds the scope of this book.

Avelino Teixeira da Mota offered another explanation for the distribution of the *lançados* along the coast and inland, along the riverbanks, from Cabo Verde to Sierra Leone. In his view, this part of the coast had extensive contact with the inhabitants of the Cabo Verde Islands, which created especially favorable conditions for escape (Mota 1978: 8). We assume that many factors affected the settlement of Portuguese runaways on the African coast and that the proposals

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put forward by Brooks and Avelino Teixeira da Mota are not mutually exclusive, but complementary.

The processes of acculturation and assimilation of the *lançados* took place in each of the political milieus in which they were active. But even in those early states that had an apparatus of coercion, fugitives were not forced to adopt local customs and/or beliefs. The *lançados* could be subjected to only a degree of pressure, but this pressure was rather of a customary, not systemic nature. Their acculturation was an ongoing, long-term and spontaneous process arising from extensive cultural contact between a minority – the runaway *lançados* and *tangomaos* – and the majority of the African community among whom they had settled. This process had its limits, however, which coincided with the *lançados*' usefulness as middlemen. They were useful as long as they had knowledge of the Portuguese language and customs. The results of this process of acculturation and assimilation can be observed and described on the basis of texts dating from the end of the 16th century and into the 17th. At the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries, however, this process was only beginning.

The partial acculturation and assimilation of the Portuguese minority in Africa was the reverse side of the process of acculturation and assimilation of black slaves who were shipped to Portugal in the 15th and the early 16th centuries. The fundamental difference between the two was that the first resulted from coercion, which caused an African to become a slave and be shipped to Portugal; the nature of the *lançados*' settlement in Africa was voluntary.

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CHAPTER 11

Women

My aim in this chapter is to collect and examine all the available source materials that shed light on the role played by women in the history of Portuguese contact with Africa in the 15th and early 16th centuries. We shall focus on both the African and European women who were involved in the cultural encounters under discussion. The way in which such encounters unfolded, as well as the results they produced, depended not only on the number of participants on each side, but also on their social status, age, and gender. Hence, a woman's presence, or absence, mattered at each stage of these contacts, beginning with plundering raids and ending with regular and undisturbed trade.

The Europeans who embarked on the expeditions to Africa had specific characteristics as a group. They were outnumbered by the Africans with whom they fought, negotiated, or traded. They were young men, who carried out their tasks either in the total absence of female companionship, or – and this was the case only after the establishment of more regular contact with Africa – with a very small number of women present. In Africa, the world of European sailors, merchants, conquerors, fortress-builders, manufacturers, and explorers was almost exclusively male. On the other hand, the various African societies with which the Europeans came into contact were not only more numerous but differed from one another in terms of age, gender, and social function.

The role of women in the early phase of the Portuguese expeditions to Africa has been discussed in works on geographical discoveries only incidentally. Avelino Teixeira da Mota briefly addressed this topic when writing about the garrison of the São Jorge da Mina fortress (Mota 1976; 1978: 10). Similar treatment is received in some passages in works by J. Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, Christopher DeCorse, and John Vogt (Ballong-Wen-Mewuda 1993: 263–269; Vogt 1979: 46–47, 51, 55–56; DeCorse 2001: 36–37). Paul Hair relegated his perspicacious remarks to the footnotes of his work on the founding of the fortress of São Jorge da Mina (Hair 1994a: 91 footnote 195, 92 footnote 197, 95 footnote 211). The issue has been dealt with more extensively in some articles that discuss the role of African women in the development of domestic trade networks in West Africa and that explore the networks' links with Portuguese trade (Havik 1994: 83–120; 1997: 165–168). After Havik's series of articles, his book about the importance and function of *lançado* and Luso-African women and wives in today's Guinea-Bissau was published (Havik 2004). However, those works concern the second half of the 16th and the 17th centuries, whereas here we focus on an earlier period. There is also a noteworthy chapter in a book by David

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Northrup, which ranges from the 16th to the 19th centuries (Northrup 2009: 69–75). The history of women slaves in Africa, and in the transatlantic trade, are discussed and analyzed by many authors in the work edited by Claire C. Robinson and Martin A. Klein (1983).

•••

Even in the early phase of Portuguese expansion, the explorers' attention was drawn to African women, whom they first saw mainly as slaves to be hunted, but also as objects of sexual desire, fascination, or threat.

In 1441, a small caravel with a crew of 21 men commanded by Antão Gonçalves reached the Saharan coast in the region of Rio de Oro. Several crew members went ashore in search of 'some man or woman […] whom they could capture' (Zurara-Beazley: 41), (*por ali acudir algum homem ou muller que eles pudessam filar*) (Zurara-Soares: 86). First, they came across a young man who, after being wounded by his pursuers, fell into their hands. Then they saw more people on the top of a hill and followed them, but to no avail. As the night drew closer, the Portuguese decided to retreat to their ship. On their way back, 'they saw a black Mooress come along who was a slave of those on the hill' (Zurara-Beazley: 41), (*viram ir uma moura negra, que era serva daqueles que ficavam no outeiro*) (Zurara-Soares: 87). Some suggested leaving her alone, for they were afraid she might have been part of an ambush. However, Antão Gonçalves ordered his men to show no sign of weakness or fear but to try to capture her. The people who had earlier been seen on the hill wanted to come to her rescue, but they fled once they saw that the Portuguese were ready to fight.

Zurara again referred to the suspicion that African women might have wanted to lure the Portuguese into a trap, in the account of the 1444 or 1445 expedition led by Antão Gonçalves and several other caravel commanders (Zurara-Soares: 119, 179; Zurara-Bourdon: 119, see footnotes 1 and 5 for expedition date). In the area of Cabo Blanco the expedition exchanged goods with the people living on the coast there. However, Gonçalves and his men remained wary and distrustful. Some hostages were exchanged on that occasion. Two Portuguese hostages were taken to the Moors' tents, where they saw a number of beautiful women who began to seduce them, some in a very licentious way. According to the chronicler, it was the fear of running into an ambush that made the Portuguese capable of resisting their desire. According to Zurara, one couldn't be certain:

> whether this was attempted with deceit, or whether it was only the wickedness of their nature that urged them to this, let it be the business of each one to settle as he thinks best (Zurara-Beazley: 111),

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> Mas se isto era enganosamente cometido, ou se a natureza maliciosa de si mesma o constrangia, fique ao encargo de cada um o determinar como lhe bem pareça (Zurara-Soares: 197).

The Africans had probably wanted to take advantage of the situation of the Portuguese. However, both their objectives and the outcome of their efforts remain unclear. So too does the conduct of the hostages. The sources abound in such vague narratives. The Venetian merchant Ca da Mosto, we are told, appreciated the beauty of a young slave girl whom he received from Budomel as a gift. But after sending her away to his caravel, he never mentioned her again (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 50). The attractiveness of an African slave girl drew the attention of Hieronimus Münzer, who wrote in a letter dated around 1495 that 'Martin Behaim's father-in-law has a beautiful slave girl whom I had the opportunity to see' (*socer domini Martini Bohemi habet unam pulchram schlavam, quam ego vidi*) (Münzer 1854: 352). Eustache Delafosse, in turn, described how some women from the settlement of Aldeia das Duas Partes had enticed him into a hut and cast a spell on him. As a result, he lost two copper basins he had planned to sell (Delafosse-Escudier: 30).

The intimate sphere was usually omitted from the accounts. It was quite exceptional for Zurara to include in his text the scene in which African women lured the Portuguese. It testifies to the intense emotions that the incident must have aroused. All we know for sure is that the Portuguese tended to recognize the attractiveness of African women, being at the same time afraid that they might want to lure them into a trap, to cast a spell on them, or otherwise trick them. In typical medieval fashion, Zurara attributed an intrinsically 'wicked nature' to these women.

Women also appear in historical accounts as victims of slave hunting. The sources contain descriptions of the tragedy they experienced as well as the courage some of them displayed during such 'hunts.' Zurara's chronicle describes the despair and resistance of a woman who was being taken into captivity. Because she kept wrenching herself from her captors' grasp, making it impossible for them to take her to their caravel, they tied her up and left her in the woods, so that they could freely continue their hunt for other Africans. As it turned out, the hunters did not have enough time to return for her later. Consequently, she was presumably devoured by wild animals (Zurara-Soares: 413). Zurara also described the bravery of another woman whose resistance ended with a profoundly moving decision. In 1445 or 1446, Álvaro Fernandes was in command of an expedition to Africa. After passing the Cabo Verde, the caravel reached Cabo dos Mastos (Zurara-Bourdon: 212, footnote 1). Mota proposed two different locations for the cape, but they refer to places in close proximity

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to each other – south of Cabo Verde and before the Saloum River estuary (Mota 1947: 318; Mota 1950: 99–102). As they sailed along the coast, the Portuguese occasionally went ashore in search of booty. One day, they saw a group of women collecting shellfish at a creek.

> They captured one of them, who would be as much as thirty years of age, with a son of hers who would be of about two, and also a young girl of fourteen years, who had well-formed limbs and also a favorable presence for a Guinean; but the strength of the woman was much to be marveled at, for not one of the three men who came upon her but would have had a great labor in attempting to get her to the boat. And so one of our men, seeing the delay they were making, during which it might be that some of the dwellers of the land would come upon them, conceived it well to take her son from her and to carry him to the boat; and love of the child compelled the mother to follow after it, without great pressure on the part of the two who were bringing her (Zurara-Beazley: 259–260).

> [...] e tomaram una delas que teria de idade uns 30 anos, com um seu filho que seria de dois; e assim uma moça de 14, na qual havia assaz boa postura de membros e, ainda, presença razoável para giuné [que era]. Mas a força da mulher era assaz para maravilhar, pois de três que se ajuntaram a ela, não havia nenhum que não tivesse bastante trabalho querendo-a levar ao batel; vendo a detença que faziam (na qual, poderia acontecer sobrechegarem alguns daqueles moradores da terra), houve um deles a resolução de lhe tomar o filho, e levá-lo ao batel; cujo amor forçou a mãe a ir-se após ele, sem muito esforço dos dois que a levavam. (Zurara-Soares: 495–496).

Zurara's account tends to praise the ingenuity displayed by one of the slave hunters in dealing with the captured women. Perhaps the chronicler faithfully retold the story as heard from the participants of the expedition and, consequently, his account reflects their view of the event more than it does his. Zurara did not try to comment on the event in any direct way. Contrasted with the mother's love for her child, the Portuguese knights' cruelty and ruthlessness is particularly appalling. Notably, the scene includes admiration for the attractiveness of the captured girl.

Other authors, too, described spectacular escapes attempted by some of the women whom the Portuguese had managed to capture. Attempts to break free from the hands of their captors were just further proof of the courage and determination of which African women were capable. According to Zurara, in

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1445, during the expedition led by Lançarote, a Moorish girl who had been taken captive,

> threw herself into the water, and like one practised in that kind of thing very quickly got to land and joined her relations and her friends (Zurara-Beazley: 205).

> lançou-se à água, e como acustumada em aquele trabalho, em mui breve tempo saíu em terra, entre seus parentes e amigos (Zurara-Soares: 389).

Not so lucky was another slave girl, who in 1480 tried to take advantage of the stopover of a few caravels on a small island near Cabo Sierra Leone. She went ashore, hid, and waited for the caravels to set sail again. She then dived into the water and started swimming in the direction of the mainland. However, it turned out that she had left her hiding place too early. The caravel crew noticed the woman swimming and sent a boat after her. She was thus enslaved once again (Delafosse-Escudier: 38).

Such successful or unsuccessful attempts at escape, and effective or ineffective resistance, must have taken place quite often. They certainly caught the attention of eyewitnesses and chroniclers. Europeans must have considered this conduct at odds with the way in which women were expected to behave. As such, these events must have been highly remarkable. Tales of escapes of men do not appear in the accounts of European expeditions in Africa – where male Africans were concerned, the chroniclers' interest lay rather in recounting their armed clashes with the Portuguese.

The examples above refer to isolated cases, and therefore provide no sound basis for generalization. However, what can safely be ascertained here is that in the earliest expeditionary period, Europeans noted the attractiveness of African women and appreciated their value as slaves. It was also their impressive and unusual behavior – so far removed from European stereotypes – that aroused their interest. Moreover, the Portuguese considered these women to be dangerous, as they could be used as bait in potential ambushes.

An opportunity to learn more about African women arose when the Portuguese chose to establish commercial links with Africans. Explorers and authors of the chronicles were particularly interested in, and often truly excited about, polygamy among the Africans (Horta 1991a: 321–322). Zurara did not mention anything about this custom, as the witnesses he relied upon for information had not yet had the opportunity to learn anything about this aspect of African social life. What was impossible in the case of Zurara became possible for Ca

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da Mosto, who observed and described polygamy among the Wolof. The Venetian author wrote that:

> The King [the ruler of the Jolof state] is permitted to have as many wives as he wishes, as also are all the chiefs and men of this country, that is, as many as they can support. Thus King has always thirty of them, though he favors one more than another, according to those from whom they are descendant the rank of the lords whose daughters they are (Crone 1937: 30).

> A questo re è licito tenir quante muier el vole; – e cossì etami a tuti li signori et homini de quel paexe: cadauno ne pol tenir quante el vol, a quante el puol far le spexe; – e cossì questo re ne ha sempre da 30 in suso, e fa però più stima de una cha de un'altra, secondo le persone de chi le son dessesse e de la grandeza de'segnori de chi le son fiole (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 42–43).

Ca da Mosto observed that polygamy did not imply all men had many wives. This was an option available only to those who could afford it. Thus, while there were men with numerous wives, there were also those who had no wives at all. Ca da Mosto also added:

> He [the king] has certain villages and places, in some of which he keeps eight or ten of them. Each has a house of her own, with young servants to attend her, and slaves to cultivate the possessions and lands assigned by the lord […]. When the king arrives at one of these villages, he goes to the house of one of his wives, for they are obliged to provide, out of this produce, for him and those accompanying him. […] In this fashion he journeys from place to place without giving any thought to his victuals, and lodges sometimes with one wife, sometimes with another […]. All the other chiefs of this country live in this same fashion (Crone 1937: 30–31).

> [Questo re …] havea el à certi vilazi e luogi suoi, nei qualli in algum luogo el ne tien 8 o 10, e altratante in uno altro luogo, e cossì de luogo in luogo. E chadauna de queste soe mugiere sta da per sé in chassa, e hano cadauna de esse tante femene zovene che le serve, et etiam hanno tanti schiavi per chadauna, i qualli lavorano certe possessione e tereni che'l dito signor dà per cadauna de queste soe muier, azoché de le intrade de queste terre se possano mantegnir; […] E quando l'acade che'l dito re va ad alguno di

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> prediti vilazi, el non porta drieto né vituaria né altra cossa, perché dove el va, quelle soe muiere che là se atrovano sono obligate a farli le spexe a lui e a tuti li soi che mena con lui [...]. E per questo modo el va de luogo in logo e vive senza pensier de haver alguna cura del suo manzar. El va a dormir con una quando con l'altra de le dite soe muiere, e cresce in molto numero de fioli [...]. E per questo medemo modo de sopra viveno li altri signori de quel paexe (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 43–44).

In Cayor, the Wolof state ruled by Budomel, Ca da Mosto noted that the ruler's estates were organized along similar lines, with many wives entrusted with the task of administering them. The Venetian stayed in one of the ruler's places of residence.

> In this place Budomel had nine wives: and likewise in his other dwellings, according to his will and pleasure. Each of this wives has five or six young negro girls in attendance upon her, and it is as lawful for the lord to sleep with these attendants upon her, and it is as lawful for the lord to sleep with these attendants as with his wives, to whom this does not appear any injury, for it is customary. In this way the lord changes frequently. These negroes, both men and women, are exceedingly lascivious (Crone 1937: 38).

> In questo luogo Bodumel havea nove muiere; e altre molte muiere el tien, che sono repartide, como ho dito, in più luogi. E chadauna de queste soe muiere ha 5 over 6 garzone negre, che le serve; et è licito al signor de dormir cossi con le serve de la muier como con le muiere medesseme; né le dite soe muiere non hano per inzuria, per esser cossi la costuma: per questo el predito Bodumel muda ogni note pasto. E sono questi Negri e Negre molto luxuriosi (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 53).

Writing about the customs of the Wolof, Ca da Mosto noted that local women were cheerful and very much liked dancing (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 70). Diogo Gomes also briefly referred to polygamy (Gomes 1959: 45), while further information on the topic is provided by Valentim Fernandes. In his opinion, the Mandingo customs were similar to those of the Wolof. It was probably Ca da Mosto to whom they owed the information that the Mandingo 'King and even everyone one else may have as many wives as he wishes and is able to buy,' and that the ruler's wives were required to feed his retinue (*Elrey ou outro qualquer pode ter quãtas molheres quiser e pode cõprar*) (Fernandes 1951: 40).

Fernandes supplemented the account of the ruler's relations with his numerous wives with information about the 'succession principle – each night

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with a different wife.' The paragraph in which the author described the custom of buying wives was also devoted to the Mandingo. He pointed out that 'a male Mandingo can marry every woman with the exception of his mother and sister' (*Cõ todas casã tirado may e jrmãos, toda outro nõ stranham*) (Fernandes 1951: 48). He also contended that a man could dissolve his marriage by returning the woman to the family from which she came, and by regaining the money with which she had been bought.

Europeans were interested in polygamy for a variety of reasons. First of all, the practise ran counter to the Christian principle of monogamy. In Portugal, in the period under discussion, bigamy was severely punished. The culprit was sentenced to death, with the sentence sometimes being commuted to banishment to Africa. We have already mentioned the case of Gomes Aires, who had his death sentence for bigamy commuted to exile to the island of São Tomé indefinitely (PMA: vol. 2, no. 22/12 May 1490). The most extensive and insightful among the accounts of West African polygamy is that offered by Ca da Mosto. The Venetian author revealed a political aspect to polygamy by indicating that women to whom rulers were married came from important families, the marriage thus being one way in which rulers forged alliances with other notable families. He also highlighted its economic dimension by observing that rulers' wives were entrusted with the administration of the slave villages. Ca da Mosto also attempted to look at polygamy from the social and psychological points of view. He remarked that it was in tune with general customs and that women not only accepted the institution, but also did not protest against their husbands having sexual relationships with their servants. It was only in conclusion that he attempted to pass a moral judgment on polygamy, imposing a European point of view in stressing the promiscuity and lasciviousness of the Wolof.

The views held by the Wolof, as well as the way in which they perceived Europeans, must have been the mirror image of those held by the Europeans. Budomel asked Ca da Mosto about the ways of satisfying many women. The Wolof ruler thought that the European newcomers would be quite adept in this (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 53–54). He must have assumed that the latter were particularly competent in this regard having watched some of the Portuguese disembark from their ships and try to make direct contact with African women.

It is Valentim Fernandes who wrote more about relations between the Portuguese and African women. According to Fernandes:

> If any of our white men stays in the house of a black man, even of the king, and asks the host for a woman or a girl, he is presented with several women out of whom he may choose those he is going to sleep with – all

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> of this happening not through coercion but out of consideration for good friendship. And it is the father of the girl chosen who takes her by the hand and gives her to the white man. The father also does not protest when the white man wants to sleep with her sisters.
>
> E se alguũ dos nossos Brãcos chegua a algũa casa de Negro e esso mesmo delrey e lhe pede qualquer molher ou filha mãda lhe que escolha qualquer dellas pera dormir cõ ellas e esto por boa amizade e nõ por força E ho pay mesmo lha ẽtregua cõ a mão aquella que elle escolheo e se quer dormir com mais irmãs tãbem lhas da (Fernandes 1951: 40; *Códice* 1997: 78).

These remarks were written in the early 16th century. By that time, there had developed an informal code of conduct (gestures, forms of behavior) to be followed in establishing these types of temporary relationships between Portuguese men and African women. Thus, the phenomenon described above probably dates back to the last decades of the 15th century.

The condemnation of African polygamy and the criticism of promiscuity did not prevent some Europeans from taking advantage of these sexual practices. While on a long expedition, far away from their own country, and in constant contact with people from other cultures, there were those Europeans who considered themselves justified in suspending moral norms which they otherwise held. African conduct, as well as their opinions, were probably, as we have already suggested, the reverse of the conduct and opinions of Europeans in this respect. The accepted norms of behavior prevalent in African society were not necessarily echoed in their contacts with Europeans.

According to Fernandes, adultery was severely punished by the Mandingo, with the punishment being meted out to the seducing man. The husband who had been cuckolded could, with the consent of the ruler, cut the culprit's skin with a knife. A long cut on the back indicated a wrongdoing. Since people used to walk naked, says Fernandes, everybody saw the long scar (*Ibidem*). The author does not say anything about how wives who were guilty of adultery were punished. Later sources, for example, the description by Pieter de Marees, confirm that the way in which Africans treated sexual relations within their own society was different from the way they viewed them with respect to Europeans (Marees-Dantzig, Jones: 11, 20–21, 37).

Fernandes's description testifies to a considerable increase in sexual contact between Europeans and Africans compared with the period described by Ca da Mosto and Diogo Gomes. Fernandes referred here to sexual relations maintained with unmarried women who were not coerced to have sex with Europeans. However, considering the fact that young girls must have felt socially

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constrained by parental power, the view that the sexual contacts in question were free of coercion does not seem to be justified. In any case, slaves do not feature in Fernandes's account and the sexual abuse they may have endured is not referred to in the earliest sources. It was not until the end of the 15th century that some authors began to allude to such occurrences. We shall return to this problem later.

The names of Africans – those of rulers, tribal chiefs, and their relatives – appear in the sources that relate the earliest phase of the Portuguese exploration of Africa. Occasionally, chronicles mention the names of important warriors, or even captives and slaves who distinguished themselves in some way. But there are no names of women; a small number of freed slaves are the only exceptions. Women who for some time maintained intimate relationships with Europeans remained nameless until the end of the 15th century. Their names began to appear at the beginning of the 16th century, after 50 years of contact between the Portuguese and Africans. This should be regarded as proof that they were treated instrumentally.

As we have already seen, Portuguese women generally did not take part in the first expeditions to Africa. However, it does not mean that the expeditions did not affect their lives. The wives of the knights who were killed in Africa were granted privileges that allowed them to maintain their social status. They were offered either land grants or special pensions (*teença*) paid by the royal treasury. Such was the case for the widow of Pedro Anes Encerrabodes (PMA: vol. 1, no. 10 from 12 December 1453; Tymowski 2014).

Even if a man were not killed in Africa, long separations often ended in a break-up of the family. In 1488, Ines Eanes was tried for eloping with João Dias, having first been married to Afonso Dias who had died in Mina. Her marriage to Afonso Dias was also illegal, as it turned out to be bigamous. Her lawful husband, Gonçalo Eanes, was still alive, although she had not seen him for a long time. Acting on behalf of the king, the judges came to the conclusion that Ines's long separation from her husband, along with the life of uncertainty she had to live, should be counted as extenuating circumstances, and they decided to grant her a pardon (PMA: vol. 1, no. 207 from 4 March 1488). Her case was not an isolated example. In 1490, Ines Pires, João Marinho's wife, was also tried for bigamy and was similarly pardoned. She had remarried because her lawful husband had not returned home after his exile of five years. Her pardon was justified on the grounds that there were rumors of her husband's death at Mina fortress. He was to have been killed, along with other men gathered around João Fagaça, in an unknown battle. Since the rumor was false, Ines Pires's marriage turned out to be bigamous, but the court decided not to punish her (PMA, vol. 2, no. 25 from 5 June 1490). In 1501, Margarida Fernandes, Álvaro Gil's

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widow – Gil had gone to Mina – was granted a pardon. She was tried and convicted for adultery, but was then pardoned when it was revealed that her husband had died at Mina (PMA, vol. 3, no. 109 from 11 October 1501). Long separation from spouses who had gone to Africa – either of their own accord or as exiles – painfully affected the life of the wives.

The situation was different in those places in West Africa where the Portuguese settled permanently and which they controlled. This was particularly the case for the castles of Arguim and São Jorge da Mina, for Axim, and for the island of São Tomé.

The earliest information about women who travelled to Africa is connected with São Jorge da Mina castle. A few hundred men, including soldiers and craftsmen, took part in the expedition led by Diogo de Azambuja who in 1482 supervised the construction of the castle. A few women were assigned to the expedition, although their exact number remains unknown. In any case, after the castle had been built, Azambuja sent most members of the expedition back to Portugal, while he remained in Africa with 60 soldiers and three women. He spent two years and seven months in Mina organizing a trading post. These events are described in several sources (Pina-MMA 1952: 14; Barros-Cidade: 77–85; Pacheco-Mauny: 120–123; Hair 1994a), but it was only Rui de Pina who offered some information about these women (Pina-MMA 1952: 14; Hair 1994a: 36, 102).

The 12 July 1499 report, prepared by Captain Lopo Soares and other officials who were about to leave their post at Mina, mentions seven women who stayed at the castle (*Descobrimentos portugueses* 1971: vol. 3, no. 525 from 12 July 1499). The women were not black slaves but subjects of the king of Portugal sent to Mina as exiles (*degradadas*). According to Hair, such a punishment was usually meted out to prostitutes, not because they were prostitutes but because of crimes they had committed while plying their trade, such as theft (Hair 1994a: 92).

Two documents, dated 1 February 1509 and 1 March 1509, contain the list of the castle's residents. The preparation of such a list was occasioned by the distribution of bread rations. The first document mentions, in a separate category, four women, in addition to the already-mentioned six, and gives both their first and second names. Catarina, Fernan d'Avila's wife, was put on the list separately. She and her husband were referred to as the king's slaves (*escravos del-Rei noso senhor*). It is likely that they were also *degradados*, probably sent into exile together as a married couple. Mina's captain, Afonso de Babadilha, appears in the list along with his wife and 28 other persons who usually surrounded him. Other high-ranking officials – a factor (an official put in charge of a trading post), a judge, and scribes – are mentioned without their wives. In

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total, the 1 February 1509 list contains 78 men and six women (PMA: vol. 5, no. 130 from 1 February 1509).

The list drawn up a month later includes 131 men and seven women. The group of six women mentioned above was joined by one further person. She came from Axim, along with a large group of men who considerably raised the total number of the castle's population (PMA: vol. 5, no. 138 from 1 March 1509). With people on the move, the number of those who made up the garrison altered, but women were constantly outnumbered by men. While Diogo de Azambuja remained in command, there was one Portuguese woman for every 20 men, one woman for every 13 men in February 1509, and one woman for every 19 men on 1 March 1509.

In 1529, Manuel I the Fortunate issued a decree (*regimento*) concerning the administration of São Jorge da Mina (*Regimento* 1993; also *Regimento* 1957; *Regimento* 1959). This *regimento* was based on a previous decree issued in 1506. Both documents are likely to have drawn on principles elaborated by Diogo de Azambuja. Both the 1506 decree and Azambuja's principles are now lost (Birmingham 1970: 1–7; DeCorse 2001: 36–37; Vogt 1979: 182). The 1529 document defines the rules and principles on which the life and work of European women who stayed in Mina were to be based. The women were referred to as *molheres solteiras* – that is, single and unmarried. The thirty-fifth paragraph explains their duties. They were supposed to work at the hospital and take care of the sick. They were also required to work at the bread ovens, mill flour, wash clothes, and perform a variety of other tasks. Just like the remaining members of the castle garrison, they were entitled to a daily ration of bread, oil and vinegar, as the documents from 1509 also inform us. They had slave women at their disposal. The high-ranking officials were forbidden from monopolizing the services of the *molheres solteiras* under pain of losing their pay. In short, they could not use these women exclusively. The women, in turn, were forbidden – also under the threat of losing their pay – from working only for the officials, while they were also to be properly paid for working for the entire garrison (*Regimento* 1957, 1993: Chapters 35–37). There is no doubt that these regulations were issued as a response to the appropriation of the women's work or even their persons by high-ranking officials. The enforceability of these rules could be seriously doubted.

The paragraph that describes women's working practices has provoked scholarly discussion. Teixeira da Mota and, later, Hair claimed – their interpretation of the respective text being consistent with other sections of the *regimento* – that the 'other tasks' for which the women were to be paid were sexual in nature (Mota 1978: 10–11; Hair 1994a: 92). According to Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, this paragraph needs to be interpreted in a different way. In his

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opinion, the king stood guard over the women's chastity (Ballong-Wen-Mewuda 1993: 267). I find the interpretation put forward by Teixeira da Mota and Hair more convincing. It is more plausible, particularly in the context of the whole *regimento*. There can also be no doubt that a small number of women caused tension and conflict among the male garrison of the castle, both over ordinary household chores, such as washing, and over their intimate life as well.

The *regimento* also reveals that the *molheres solteiras* were assigned African slave women to help them. Undoubtedly, the general lack of female companionship led the castle's inhabitants to become increasingly interested in African women, both as slaves and free women. There are a few documents testifying that there were African slave women who, after living for some time in Portugal, were sent back to Africa in the king's service. The first dates from 1454. It says that Afonso V would free a slave, Fatima, provided she went to Africa as his servant (PMA: vol. 1, no. 11 from 17 May 1454, also published in *Monumenta Henricina* 1960–1970: vol. II, 351). The second document is dated 20 April 1499 and states that Manuel the Fortunate liberated one of his slaves, Beatriz Gomes (PMA: vol. 2, no. 239). Beatriz had probably been sent from Portugal to Mina where, after serving there for some time, she was liberated and granted the right to return and live in the kingdom. These were exceptional situations. There was no point in sending slave women from Portugal to Africa in order to burden them with household tasks. Those African slave women who were sent from Europe to Africa probably served as interpreters, whereas those entrusted with mundane jobs were placed in the castle right after being captured or purchased in Africa.

The 1519 document enumerates African slave women who were working at the castle, as it does their duties and some of their owners (Ballong-Wen-Mewuda 1993: vol. 1, 267–268). Magdalena, Isabel, Margarida with her son, and Antonia with her two sons worked at the bread ovens. Catarina, Margerida, and Cristova served in the captain's house. Catarina, Francisca, and Catarina's daughter served in the house of the factor. Ines, with her daughter, worked in Pedro de Seixas's house. Mecia and her daughter were in the service of people referred to as residents. Brizida and her two daughters remained in the service of a judge (*alcaide-mor*). Maria Velha was also in the service of residents, as were two other Marias. Garcia worked with her four sons at the bread ovens, while Francisca and her daughter served in Francisco de Seixas's house, and Guimara with her son worked for residents.

Thus, we have evidence that 18 African slaves served in the houses of high-ranking officials and ordinary members of the garrison (that is probably how the term 'residents' should be understood). We know about some of their duties, especially at ovens. The remaining slave women worked as domestic

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servants. Nine slave women had children, some of them two, and one of them as many as four. This is proof that their owners, and perhaps other people, abused them sexually. Children, or at least some of them, were not taken away from their mothers and sold, but kept as slaves. One of the daughters – clearly older than the remaining children – worked as a servant, just like her mother. If the children were the offspring of a slave owner, they could be liberated, their liberation probably taking place at an older age when they were no longer in their mother's care. At any rate, the document clearly shows that some slave women were placed in the houses of their owners, for whom they worked and who used them in a variety of ways, including for sex. While, as the men saw it, the presence of these women made the gender ratio at least slightly less unfavorable to them, it can't be denied that these slave women did not enjoy any protections and were subjected to oppression of a physical and mental nature. As a consequence, there also appeared at Mina, and indeed at other places where the Portuguese stayed, a group of mulattos, although they are not mentioned in the 1519 document. Their existence is attested to in later sources, and I shall return to this topic.

In São Jorge da Mina it was also possible for Europeans to maintain relationships with free African women. The early evidence is to be found in the account of Eustache Delafosse's journey to the coast of Mina in 1481 (before the castle São Jorge da Mina had been built), to the settlement called Aldeia das Duas Partes (Delafosse-Escudier: 28, 30). However, the small dictionary that Delafosse included in his account offers a more telling testimony in this regard.

Among the few Akan and Mande words that Delafosse noted is the term *chocque-chocque*, which means making love. This is evidence that the newcomers (who arrived in Mina Coast for only a short stay) were quick to establish intimate relations with local women. In 1482, in the village visited by Delafosse, the Portuguese built a castle that was to be continually occupied by several dozen men. From that moment on the contacts in question could only have intensified. An African village grew at the foot of the walls of the castle. The castle soldiers visited the village in search of sexual partners, both regular and casual. If a couple established a permanent relationship, it was considered a marriage. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries there were many mulattos born to such couples, who subsequently served as intermediaries in contacts between Africans and Europeans (Marees-Dantzig, Jones: 26, footnote 3; Vogt 1979: 179, 182; DeCorse 2001: 37; Feinberg 1989: 36, 88–92).

From the very beginning of the settlement of the island of São Tomé, there is evidence that points to sexual relationships between African women and European men, and even European women and African men, although the

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latter was rare due to the small number of European women who travelled to Africa. According to Valentim Fernandes, when both spouses were white, the women did not get pregnant. It was only mixed marriages that bore children – regardless of whether it was the wife who was black or the husband (*muito mais poré as aluas das negros e as negras dos homẽs aluos*) (Fernandes 1951: 118, see also Pina 1950: Chapter 150; Mauny 1949: 354–378). This remark referred to the group of 2,000 Jewish children, none of whom were older than eight years of age, sent to the island in 1492. Six hundred managed to survive the harsh climate and came of age. One might guess that the situation was similar for other mixed couples, with the difference being that among the Portuguese who, either of their own accord or as exiles, travelled to the island, men overwhelmingly outnumbered women. The gender ratio among the Jewish children must have been more balanced.

Fernandes notes that 1,000 Portuguese inhabited the island at the beginning of the 16th century. Only some of them were there of their own accord. Some came to the island from Guinea for commercial purposes, and they stayed there for only a short time. Exiles made up the largest group of the island's inhabitants (*poré os mais som os degredados*) (Fernandes 1951: 120). The king ordered that all who arrived on the island as a *degradado* were to receive a slave who would help them. It was for each *degradado* to decide whether they wanted to rely on the assistance of a male or female slave. Some *degradados* became wealthy enough to have 14 or more slaves. The slaves grew yams and millet for their masters. Fernandes estimated that there must have been about 2,000 slaves living on the island permanently. Moreover, there were about 5,000–6,000 slaves staying on the island for a brief period of time while they waited to be sold elsewhere (Fernandes 1951: 120).

The information given by Fernandes is confirmed in the document from 4 November 1508. The document is an inventory of property owned by Álvaro Borges, who died on the island of São Tomé. Added to the inventory is the list of the items that were sold on 8, 15, and 25 November of that year (PMA: vol. 5, no. 89 from 4 November 1508). The inventory clearly shows that Borges had 10 female slaves and eight male slaves. All female slaves that belonged to the deceased and had remained on the island for a longer period of time had one or two children. The only childless slaves were those who had been brought to the island relatively recently. The first slave woman to be mentioned in the inventory was one:

> by the name of Jabell, along with her one-year-old son, a mulatto – the son of Lop Eanes to whom she – as a slave of the king, our lord – had been made over according to the king's decrees.

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> Item primarramente hũa escrava por nome Jabell com filho mullato de hum anno filho de Lop'Eanes a quall escrava sse achou que era del-Rei nosso senhor que lhe tynham dado de ordenado (*Ibidem*).

We do not know how Álvaro Borges became the owner of the slave woman and her son. The document did not name Jabell and her son among the group of slaves who were sold. Perhaps, which is unlikely, they were sold nameless, or, quite the contrary, they were freed. One way or another, the document attests to a relationship between a white man and a black woman. The relationship, as well as the existence of a son, were not a secret, nor were they frowned upon. Moreover, it was not her owner, but another man who had fathered her son. He had been her previous owner.

A young mulatto by the name of Bras was among those who attempted to purchase the property left by Álvaro Borges, and it was mainly slaves that he bought (PMA: vol. 5, no. 89). This illustrates that it was possible for children born to mixed couples to be freed later and pursue lucrative business ventures.

These isolated cases known from the 1508 document are attested to as quite typical in the description of the journey from Lisbon to the São Tomé by an anonymous Portuguese pilot. The text was written around 1540, but it is only the 16th-century Italian translation that survives, which was printed in 1550 in the Ramusio collection (*Navigazione* 1978: 565–588; and translations into English: Blake 1967: 145–166; French: Sauvageot, ed. 1961: 123–138; and Portuguese: Caldeira 2000). According to the pilot, São Tomé was permanently inhabited by 600–700 families, including merchants from various countries – among them Portugal, Castile, Genoa, and France.

> They all have wives and children, and some of the children who are born there are as white as ours. It sometimes happens that when the wife of a merchant dies he takes a negress and this is an accepted practice, as the negro population is both intelligent and rich; the children of such unions are brought up to our customs and way of dressing. Children born of these negresses' [have lighter skin] or [are mischievous and difficult to manage] and are called Mulati (mulatoes) (Blake 1967: 157 including changes cited below).

> […] e tutti hanno moglie e figliuoli. E sono quelli che nasycono in detta isola bianchi come noi, ma alle volte accade che detti marcatanti, moren doli le mogli bianche, ne prendono delle negre: nel che non vi fanno troppo difficulta, essendovi abiatori negri di grande intellecto e ricci, che

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> allevano le loro figliuole al modo nostro nell costumi e nel vestire. E quelli che nascono di queste tal negre sono berrettini, e vengono chiamati mulati (*Navigazione* 1978: 578).

The remarks about the difficulties of raising children are absent from the Ramusio edition that was prepared by M. Milanesi and based on the first, 1550 edition. John Blake translated as follows: 'Children born of these negresses are mischievous and difficult to manage.' However, the information about the lighter color of these children's skin is omitted from Blake's translation (Blake 1967: 157). In his comments about Ramusio's text, and the difficulties encountered in the publication of its translation, Blake highlights the discrepancies between the first (1550) and second (1554) editions (Blake 1967: 145).

According to Arlindo Caldeira, who published the text *Navigatione*, translated into Portuguese with numerous comments, the above comment by Blake was taken from an earlier English translation of this text by Charles R. Boxer (1963: 21). In both cases, the English translation is the result of a misunderstanding. In 15th- and 16th-century Italian texts, the word *berrettini* meant 'black but with a lighter skin color' (Caldeira 2000: 104–105, note 118). We will recall that Ca da Mosto also used it in this sense in passages quoted in this book. But the same word had a second, figurative, meaning – that of 'malicious, mischievous' (*malicioso*, *velhaco* in Caldeira's text). It is clear from the context that the author of *Navigatione* was referring to skin color.

Marriages between African women and *lançados* are a separate category. One of the driving factors for the flight of these men to Africa was the desire to find a woman. *Lançados* preserved their ability to speak Portuguese, while the women they were with enabled them to develop close ties to African clans (Mota 1978: 8; Mark 2002). Their wives played an important role in organizing trade relations between the Portuguese and Africans. They served as interpreters and provided their husbands with information on local customs (Havik 1994, 1997). Gradually, *lançados* adopted many elements of the African culture in which they operated, including local beliefs. Children born as a result of such relationships acquired a knowledge of both cultures – that of the father and the mother. Consequently, there appeared a distinct group of Luso-Africans who spoke creole (Boulègue 1989; Mark 2002; Hlibowicka-Węglarz 2013). I write about this group in Chapter 10, which is devoted to *lançados*. Here I limit myself to mentioning the role of African women, without whom this group could not have emerged and existed.

Figures of African women were one of the common themes of the sculptures created by the Sapi (Temne) people from Sierra Leone, which is where

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many *lançados* settled. There they served as agents for trade with the Portuguese, for whom ivory sculptures were an important product. These items were carved saltcellars, spoons, and knife handles, and sometimes whole tusks covered with carved images. Depictions of African women appeared particularly on saltcellars. The sculptures presented women in different roles. Sometimes they were shown accompanying men, and occasionally they were depicted alone, while some of the images are profoundly erotic (see fig. 17). William Fagg writes of 'a woman blatantly displaying her sexual organs.' In the William B. Fagg and Ezio Bassani catalog there are illustrations of two Sapi saltcellars from the area of Sierra Leone: the first depicts female figures in sexual poses; the second shows women accompanying men (William Fagg 1959: X and ill 1, 4–5; Bassani, Fagg 1988: catalog no. 8, ill. 43 and 156, catalog no. 16, ill. 186; see figs. 15 and 17 in this book). These iconographic sources are in line with written accounts, and therefore enhance the credibility of the latter.

Thus, in the early period of the cultural encounter between Europeans and Africans, women from both sides are presented in numerous ways. African women can be regarded as victims of slave hunting, but also symbols of brave resistance. They were also believed to be real, or alleged, seductresses who attempted to lure white assailants into traps. After trade contact stabilized, the female role became that of occasional mistresses or of regular partners of castle inhabitants at São Jorge da Mina. They were also the wives of *lançados*, which enabled them to establish contacts within African societies. And they were mothers of mulattos, a distinct social group which made contact across the linguistic divide easier.

Portuguese women did not participate in the earliest expeditions to Africa, although the expeditions affected their lives. They were the victims of long periods of separation from their husbands. Some of those women passively resigned themselves to their fate, whereas others tried to find a way out of their difficult situation. Later, a few European women travelled to Africa. At first, these women were *degradadas*, sent into exile either to the São Jorge da Mina castle or to the island of São Tomé, where they were supposed to serve the Portuguese garrison, which included performing sexual acts. Very few black slave women freed in Portugal were sent back to Africa as interpreters. Still less numerous were the wives of Portuguese officials who traveled with their husbands to Mina or to São Tomé. The number of free Portuguese women staying in Africa was also very small.

Initially, the vast majority of women who participated in the European-African contact acted under coercion. This is most obviously the case with black slave women who were captured in Africa and Portuguese women who

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were sent there into exile. Once contact between both sides was established on a more regular basis, this resulted in the development of trade, and the number of black slave women increased. At the same time, there appeared a large number of African women who came into contact with Europeans of their own accord. A small group of those women inhabited the area around São Jorge da Mina fortress and around Axim. The most numerous were the wives of *lançados*, whose position was particularly strong, since they lived in their own environment, whereas the Portuguese fugitives were new to it.

A great number of women were treated instrumentally, which is clearly attested to by the fact that their names were never mentioned. Women banished to Africa or freed on condition they went to live in Africa were the exception. Both banishment and liberation required taking legal action which, in turn, resulted in the production of documentation by respective offices, in which their names were given. Also known were the names of wives of some of the Portuguese high-ranking officials and sometimes the names of distinguished wives of *lançados*. As is often the case with respect to other epochs and other continents, the sources that document Portuguese-African contact in the 15th and early 16th centuries give the names of people from the top and bottom of the social hierarchy. The names of ordinary people, those in the middle, including the vast majority of the European and African women who were involved, remain unknown.

The descriptions of women found in the sources that relate to the period under discussion – whether they were individuals or social groups – are unilateral. This one-sidedness is overwhelming and is much greater than in descriptions by Europeans of Africans, in some of which African men speak to us indirectly. Moreover, we have only European sources at our disposal, all of which were written by men and present a male point of view. No woman left a written account. As to artistic representations, the high probability is that they were made by men only. Not only did women participating in Portuguese-African contact remain anonymous, but no source survives which records their point of view. The presence of women is shown sporadically. There is no evidence of any long-term activities involving women. A group of *lançados* wives is an exception. This group is known to have performed specific tasks for a few centuries. Despite the one-sided nature of those sources and the ensuing distortion of the history of women during the period I have examined, I decided to include this chapter in my work. Irrespective of the intentions, views, and limitations of the authors of texts from the 15th and early 16th centuries, the extent to which many women from both sides and belonging to different social groups were harmed is evident. Given the very few sources at our disposal, we do not have the full picture of such women's lives, but only one or two moments over

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which the sources shed some light. But I feel it is worthwhile to capture, get to know and think through those few moments.

As a result, there remain many questions to which we cannot find answers. Despite these limitations, we are able to say that women played an important role in cultural encounters between Europeans and Africans and to a great extent affected the conduct of the men who took part in these meetings.

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PART 4

Both Sides about the Other

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CHAPTER 12

Europeans' Perceptions of Africans

The experiences of the people who embarked on the Portuguese expeditions to Africa belied the popular image of that continent's unknown expanses and the knowledge that had been inherited from antiquity and the Middle Ages. According to Zurara, it was thought that beyond Cabo Noun, the sun burned out all forms of life, and, therefore, there could be no inhabitants there (Zurara-Soares: 67–68). In his old age, the knight Diogo Gomes wrote about his African expeditions and pointed to certain observations that were inconsistent with the views of Ptolemy: contrary to what the great geographer had written, Africa, which he called *Aethopia australis* or *Libia inferior*, was a land:

> […] where the number of peoples there is so great that it is hardly believable […]. And I can confirm, as I have seen a great part of the world, that none was similar to this one.
>
> […] ubi est tanta multitudo gentium quod impossible est credendum […]. Et certe dico, quod vidi magnum partem mundi, sed nunquam similem istius (Gomes 1959: 27; Sintra 2002: 64).

This impression of the multitude of peoples and their variety was conveyed not only by the first discoverers. A similar sentence was written by Duarte Pacheco Pereira at the beginning of 16th century – about 50 years after the expeditions of Diogo Gomes. He was, in truth, referring to the times, entourage and person of Henry the Navigator. The Infante had, according to Pacheco, a vision that drove him to the greatest efforts in organizing expeditions:

> because in these regions he expected to encounter a multitude of new peoples, including black people, as we indeed knew and experienced from the time of the first discoveries to our day, and whose skin color, physiognomy and way of life none who had not seen those peoples could imagine (Pacheco-Kimble: 62).
>
> […] na qual Regiam se acharia tanta multitudam de nouos pouos e homeẽs negros, quanta do tempo d'este discobrimento ateegora temos sabido e praticado; cuja color e feiçam e modo de uiuer alguem poderia créer, se nam os ouuesse visto (Pacheco-Mauny: 18–20).

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According to Pacheco, that variety of peoples in Africa was reflected in differences of skin tone, body appearance, facial traits, and way of life (*modo de viver*). The last was the biggest category, as it encompassed aspects such as occupation, homes, tools, food, laws and customs, beliefs, and social and political organization.

How Europeans perceived the otherness of the African peoples has been of interest to many scholars, but they have most often focused on the period of the wane of the Middle Ages and the influence of classical antiquity, or the modern period (Mark 1974; Medeiros 1985; Horta 1991b, and Curtin 1964; Hair 1999).

This subject was first raised by Avelino Teixeira da Mota (Mota 1946: 493; 1972: 42 – first published 1944). The most extensive description and analysis of the African, in European literature which recounted voyages to the Guinea Coast from Senegal to Sierra Leone, was given by José da Silva Horta (Horta 1991a; Albuquerque et al. 1991). His exhaustive and excellently annotated work deals with the period we are interested in – the second half of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th – although it focuses on a shorter stretch of the coast. In another work, Horta broadened his research to include the Saharan segment of the coast (Horta 1991c). I made use of both works to great advantage, even if my research has led me to a different perspective on certain points.

There are also studies of the African that go beyond spatial and chronological limitations, but they concern mainly Africans who were living in Europe and only to a lesser extent those who lived on their home continent. They omit an important trait of the peoples in question, which Pacheco called their 'way of life.' The most outstanding of such works are those of Jean Devisse and Michel Mollat (Devisse, Mollat, 1979a, 1979b). In addition, certain scholars have dealt with the portrayal of the African, especially in German woodcarvings (Massing 1995; Leitch 2009, 2010). The concept of Africans as 'alien' or 'foreign' was discussed by Alfredo Margarido (Margarido 1984). He combined his interests in Africans and American Indians to create a unified image of the said 'alien' in European writing and interpretations. We are more interested, in this chapter, in the variety of African peoples and cultures as observed and described by Europeans, than in the construction of a unified model of the 'alien' based on those written works. Secondly, this chapter draws attention to the gradual increase of the Europeans' knowledge about Africans over several decades, and not only to the Europeans' final, unified, and often stereotypical view of Africans. In any case, in my opinion, such an image arose only at the turn of the 15th century.

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The black skin of the Africans who inhabited the coast south of the estuary of the Senegal did not come as a surprise to the Portuguese explorers. People of black skin had lived in Europe since the classical era and the Portuguese had come into contact with them in the Middle Ages as well (Snowden 1970; Bieżuńska-Małowist, Małowist 1987; Horta 1991b). What was new was the discovery in West Africa of the boundary of settlement that separated the Saharan coast inhabited by white Berber fishermen (the Azeneg), from the coast south of the estuary of the Senegal, which was peopled by black Africans. Another unpredicted discovery was the compact settlements and cultural diversity of black Africans.

In the learned introduction to his chronicle, Zurara wrote of the 'Garamantes and Etiópios,' drawing on information from the works of St. Gregory, St. Thomas, and, indirectly, from the work of Isidore of Seville and the earliest information written down by Herodotus (Zurara-Soares: 34, footnote 72). But the substance of the chronicle that follows the introductory text is based on the accounts of sailors who had travelled to Africa – on their direct experience and not on speculative or third-hand knowledge. After a period of expeditions to the Saharan portion of the coast in 1444, the Infante Dom Henrique had commanded his knight Gonçalo de Sintra to sail beyond the familiar coast that was home to the white Moors and to travel directly to 'Guinea' (Zurara-Soares: 156). The origin of the name 'Guinea' has been discussed by Fernando Quintino (Quintino 1965). Knowledge of such lands had been brought to the court of the Infante by prisoners taken in Africa. De Sintra, however, preferred to plunder the settlements of the Azeneg and died in battle. Thus the first sailor who reached 'the country of the blacks' (*terra des negros*) in 1444 was Nuno Tristão (Zurara-Soares: 171–173). Also in 1444, Dinis Dias, in search of the new, 'traveled to the country of the Blacks, who are called Guineans' (*chegou à terra dos negros que são chamados Guinéous*). In the event, Zurara noted:

> Although we have already used the name Guinea in many places in this story to define these foreign lands which have been visited in the time of the first expeditions, it should be known that we adopted this name in the wide sense. But this does not mean that this land is entirely uniform, because its individual regions differ greatly and are very distant from one another [...] (Zurara-Beazley: 99).
>
> E ainda que nós já nomeássemos algumas vezes em esta história por 'Guiné' a outra terra em que os primeiros foram, escrevemo-lo assim em

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> comum, mas não porque a terra seja toda uma; pois grande diferença têm umas terras das outras, e muito afastadas estão (Zurara-Soares: 175–176).

Gomes Pires, who had set out for Guinea in 1445, having sailed past the Saharan coast, arrived at 'the Nil River, which is called Çanaga.'

> The people of this green land – wrote Zurara – are wholly black, and hence this is called the land of Negros, or land of Guinea. Wherefore also the men and women are thereof called 'Guineans,' as if one were to say 'Negros' (Zurara-Beazley: 177).

> E esta gente de esta terra verde é toda negra; e por isso é ela chamada terra dos Negros ou terra de Guiné, por cujo azo os homens e mulheres dela são chamados Guinéus (que quer dizer tanto como negros) (Zurara-Soares: 336).

Zurara's terminology concerning the black population was not yet definitive. In writing about the white population of the coast and the nomads of the Sahara, he used the term 'Moors,' a word that was meant to define their skin color and Islamic religion (Zurara-Soares: 65, 78–80, 94, 110). But initially, he also used this term in connection with the black population, writing at times simply 'Moors,' and at times 'black Moors' (*mouros negros*) (Zurara-Soares: 87, 103–104, 106). Zurara was writing in the tradition of the *Reconquista* and the fight against the Muslims. But the etymology of the word 'Moor,' most probably known to him, dates back to antiquity. In the case of Portugal and the rest of Western Europe, the word derives from Latin. The word 'Moor' comes from the Latin '*maurus*,' meaning 'black.' In some other European languages, two words have emerged to describe black people, one of which is usually derived from '*maurus*.' In German there is the term '*Mohr*,' or black (see the quote of Baltasar Springer's text at the end of this chapter) and the term '*Neger*.' In Polish, the two terms are '*Murzyn*' and '*Negr*.' In most European languages, this double terminology has not survived and the term derived from the Latin '*maurus*,' used in connection with people of black skin, was replaced by others. In the end, the terms 'Negros' and 'Guineans' prevailed in Portugal. Similarly, the name 'Guinea' displaced the terms '*Ethiopia*' and '*Libia inferior*,' both of which had originated in classical antiquity.

Zurara had already seen black people on the Saharan coast of Africa, who had been captured and were then living among the Berbers. In the above-cited passages he was not only referring to the color of their skin, but defining the area inhabited by them and showing the boundary between two settlement

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areas that the Portuguese had observed on the coast. This boundary was marked by the Senegal River and the magnificently lush vegetation of Guinea.

The differences between the Berber area of settlement and that of the black peoples were very clearly set out by Valentim Fernandes. In his work summing up over 70 years of Portuguese travels to Africa, he wrote:

> The river Çanaga separates the Azenegue Moors from the province of Geloffa [the Wolof], which begins on the opposite bank [...] This first river of the blacks separates the Azenegues with their desert and their land, which is dry, sterile and arid, from the fertile land which belongs to the blacks. It is a miraculous thing that on one side of the river are men who are tanned and verging on the white and are small and lean, and on the other side they are completely black and of tall stature while the land is green and full of trees (Newitt 2010: 75).

> Çanaga ryo departe os Azenegues Moros de prouincia de Geloffa q̃ se começa doutra banda. [...] Ho primeyro ryo dos Negros q̃ parte os Azenegues cõ seu deserto e terra steril arida e seca, da terra fertil q̃ he dos Negros; cousa milagrosa q̃ huã bãda do ryo serẽ homẽs bassos sobre brãcos pequenos e secos e doutra bãda de todo negros e homẽs grãdes e terra verde e chea de aruoredos (Fernandes 1951: 4, 6).

As contacts with the Africans continued, the Portuguese became increasingly familiar with the diversity of black peoples, which had already been noticed by Zurara. The chronicler left us a detailed description of the physical differences he observed among the slaves brought to Portugal. Among them were people:

> white enough, fair to look upon, and well proportioned; others were less white than mulattoes; others again were as black as Ethiops, and so ugly both in features and in body, as almost to appear [to those who saw them] the images of a lower hemisphere (Zurara-Beazley: 81; see the Portuguese text in Chapter 9 about African slaves in Portugal).

The majority of texts referred to the black people's handsome appearance, their proportional bodies, their strength, physical prowess, and beauty (Zurara-Soares: 491). Ca da Mosto wrote:

> I was amazed and delighted that beyond the river (the Senegal) all people are very black, tall and massive, their bodies well formed [...] while on the

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> (north) side, the quoted (Azenegs) people are black (ash-grey), small, thin, ill-nourished, dried-up and small in stature (Crone 1937: 28).

> E meravegiosa cossa mi par, che di là dal fiume tuti sono negrissimi, e de qua tuti i prediti Azanegi sono negri [beretini] e suti e de picola statura e de là tuti negri sono grandi e grossi e ben formadi de corpo (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 40 – *negri*; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 493–494 – *beretini*).

The Venetian merchant made observations about the beauty of African men and women on several other occasions, too (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 52, 70, 76, 83). Moreover, as he got to know Africans better, he noted variations in the black color of their skin. Some people Ca da Mosto wrote of as *nigrissimi* or *muito negros*; of others that they 'are more gray in color rather than black' – *e si sono pintoso beretini in color cha negro* (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 42, 76, 82, 119; Crone 1937: 80). Hieronimus *Münzer* used a similar expression – *sunt excellentes nigri* – but he had noticed lighter skin tones among other Africans – *sunt subnigri declinantes ad rubedinem* (Münzer 1854: 353, 355, 357).

The Portuguese noted that the Africans' bodies had other attributes besides skin color, height, proportion, beauty, and ugliness. Among the peoples they observed, there were various methods of decorating and marking the body that were consistent with the culture of each given group from the West African coast.

As with many other observations, the earliest and most evocative descriptions turned out to be those of Ca da Mosto. Writing of the Azeneg, he noticed that:

> it is thought here that a woman who has the largest breasts is considered more beautiful than the others, with the result that each woman, to increase their size, at the age of seventeen or eighteen when the breasts are already formed, place across her chest a cord, which she binds around the breasts, and draws tight with much force; in this way the breasts are distended, and frequent pulling every day causes them to grow and lengthen so much that many reach the navel (Crone 1937: 19–20).

> E quelle donna che ha piú gran tette l'hanno per piú bella delle altre, per modo che ciascheduna femmina, per averle grandi, come sono ei età di dicesette in desotto anni, che le tette siano alquanto grandi, si fa legar una corda a traverso il petto, che li cigne le tette nel mezzo che le se despiccano, e con il molto tirar ogni giorno le fanno crescer e allongarsi tanto che a molte arrivano a l'ombelico (Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 493; Ca

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da Mosto-Leporace: 29 adds that this is an unpleasant sight – *desutole da veder*).

During his second voyage, Ca da Mosto traded by the Gambia River with the ruler Batimansa, and his people, the Mandingo. In his reminiscences of the religion and lifestyle of those people, the Venetian merchant wrote that:

> the women […] while still very young, by piercing their breasts with a needle, neck and arms; these piercings create on their skins a pattern reminiscent of the silk embroidery on our handkerchiefs, and are made by fire so they can never be removed (Crone 1937: 70).

> Le feminne […] quando che sono piccole di età, di farsi alcune opere per le carni, fatte con punture di ago su per il petto, braccia e collo, le quali pareno di queste opere di seda che solevan farsi sopra i fazzoletti; e sono fatte con fuoco, che mai par alcun tempo vanno via (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 103; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 529).

Writing of the voyage of Pedro da Sintra, the Venetian merchant provided information about the coastal inhabitants of the Cabo Sagres area, who were:

> idolators worshipping statues of wood in the form of men […] they have different marks made of hot irons on their faces and bodies […] on their ears and other parts of the bodies they have various signs marked with hot irons […]. These people have ears that are pierced around the edge and they were in them various yellow rings, one after the other. They also pierce their nostrils, in the middle, at the bottom and in the holes thus made they hang a golden ring (Crone 1937: 80).

> […] quelli talli esser idolatri […] che adorano le statue de legno de forma de homini; […] ma hano alguni segni fati con fero de focho e per el viso e per el corpo […] e hano queste zente le orechie tute forade de bussi atorno, ne li qual busi portano dibersi aneleti d'oro, uno direto a l'otro; e cossi etiamido hano el nasso forado de soto, nel mezzo del qual lugo portano uno anel d'oro (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 119–120; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 539).

Ca da Mosto also wrote of the perforating and decorating of noses and ears in his account of the peoples of the Cabo Misurado area (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 125).

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These were the first European descriptions of scarification, i.e., indelible marks made by cutting, piercing, perforating or burning the skin, to form specific patterns (see figs. 15 and 16). In addition, Ca da Mosto described the practise of decorating the body by hanging objects through the perforations. The Venetian accurately associated those customs and practises, firstly, with specific groups and, secondly, with those groups' respective beliefs. He correctly observed that the custom of decorating the body with permanent marks had a sacral significance and reflected the individual's ties to a given group. His description of the scarification of little girls relates to another element that is known to us from anthropological studies – such practices were associated with rite-of-passage ceremonies for children of about seven to eight years old, and used distinctive decorative signs for males and females, and to identify specific age groups. The Venetian merchant added that:

> sailors say moreover that the wives of the Kings and of the chiefs, or of men of standing have their vaginal lips pierced just as their ears, and wear on them, as a sign of their dignity, high position, grandeur and rank, rings of gold which they take off or place on as they please (Ca da Mosto-Crone: 80).

> E dixono (i marinari) che le femine di signori, over de li hominid da conto, in questo paexe hano li lapri de la natura foradi de alguni busi, sì como le orechie, ne li qual busi portano, per dignitade o per signification de stado, aneli d'oro, sì como a l'orechie, li qualli eli se tirano e meteno a suo bel piasere (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 120; Ca da Mosto-Milanesi: 539).

This passage links a woman's ritual labial piercing and body decorations to her social position. It can't be ruled out, however, that this was the first, albeit imprecise, information about female circumcision to appear in Portugal.

Ca da Mosto was an unusually astute observer. Other contemporary travelers and authors did not mention body decorations. The Venetian merchant, in contrast, wrote of what he had personally seen and of what he had heard from sailors who were his informers. The next Portuguese texts concerning body markings emerged only 50 years later. Pacheco Pereira described the custom of scarification in Benin, which consisted of marking the forehead:

> And people of Beny and its neighborhood are branded with a line above the eyebrows, it's their distinguishing mark. None of the other negroes had it done in this way and this place and thanks to this sign they can easily recognize each other (Pacheco-Kimble: 127).

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> [...] e a jente do Beny e suas comarcas sam ferrados de huns Riscos nas sobrancelhas, que por este modo e em tal lugar nenhuns outros negros isto teem; e por este sinal se podem bem conhecer. (Pacheco-Mauny: 136).

The practice of scarification in Benin is reflected in local bronze sculptures. The signs on the forehead are visible on the sculptures of the heads of rulers and of their wives, and decorative marks on the entire body can be seen on the sculptures of their subjects (see fig. 16).

Descriptions of body mutilation from the early 16th century concern above all the custom of circumcision, and reflected a double context – that of cultural differences among Africans, and religious rituals. Whereas Ca da Mosto was interested in these customs in themselves, early 16th-century authors were rather concerned with the beliefs of the Africans and in the chances for their conversion.

According to Valentim Fernandes, the rulers of the Wolof were Muslim while the majority of their subjects were pagans. All of them, Muslims and pagans, were circumcised 'like the Moors' – *como Mouros* (Fernandes 1951: 8). Fernandes related a similar observation about the Balangas people who inhabited the area around the Rio Grande (Geba). According to him, they were pagans, who worshipped a piece of wood to which they gave chickens in sacrifice. All were circumcised (Fernandes 1951: 60). Thus, Fernandes also associated the custom of circumcision with the cultural identity and beliefs of these, and other, peoples.

The most extensive information about circumcision is found in *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* by Duarte Pacheco Pereira. He paid particular attention to this ritual, mostly in a religious context and in terms of the possibility, or lack thereof, of converting the people being described to Christianity. In Pacheco's opinion, pagan peoples engaged in circumcision under the influence of the Muslims (we know today that this was not the case). According to him:

> These peoples [the Wolof], as those of the great kingdom of Mandingua and of Tucurol and other negroes, are all circumcised, are Mohammedans and worship in the false sect of Mahomet (Pacheco-Kimble: 80).

> [...] e toda este jente com ha do grande Reino de Mandingua e Tucurol e outros negros todos som circomcisos e macometas, os quaes adoram na bulrra de seyte de Mafoma (Pacheco-Mauny: 50).

He wrote of the peoples who were subjects of the Mandingo ruler and who lived on the banks of the Rio Grande (Geba):

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> almost all are Moslems and worship Mahomet and are circumcised but they know neither shame nor the fear of God (Pacheco-Kimble: 92).
>
> E quasi todos estes sam macometas e ha Mafamede adoram e sam circoncisos; ha jente em que nam ha vergonha nem medo Deos (Pacheco-Mauny: 72).

About those who lived beyond the Rio Grande, all the way to the Cabo Verga, he wrote:

> all the Negroes of this country are idolaters, and although they are ignorant of the law, they are circumcised; this is due to the fact that they are neighbors of the Mandingua and other peoples who are Mohammedans (Pacheco-Kimble: 93–94).
>
> E todolos negros d'esta terra sam ydolatras, e em caso que nam conhecem ley, sam circoncisos, e esta circoncisam thomou causa de vezinhança que teem com os Mandinguas e outros que sam macometas (Pacheco-Mauny: 74).

And similarly:

> All the Negroes from Rio Grande to Sierra Leone and further are idolaters and are circumcised without understanding the reason why they do it and why they have such a custom. Some say it is done for cleanliness, others say they would not be able to beget children without circumcision, while others say that it is the custom of their fathers (Pacheco-Kimble: 96–97).
>
> E todolos negros de Rio Grande atee esta serra Lyoa e d'aly por diante sam jentios ydolatras; e sam circoncisos sem saberem Razam por que atal circoncisam fazem e custumam, soomente dizem que o fazem por andarem limpos; e outros dizem que nam fariam geraçam se se nam circoncisasem; outros que asy ho custumáram seus padres (Pacheco-Mauny: 80–82).

Pacheco was not satisfied with these explanations. He considered that 'it is probable that the chief reason why they fall into this error' was the proximity of the Islamic peoples of the Wolof, Mandingo, and Tuculer. Neighboring groups acquired this custom from one another (Pacheco-Mauny: 82; Pacheco-Kimble: 97).

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Other peoples who lived farther away from Muslims, and who did not practice circumcision, did not escape such criticism, either. And thus, the inhabitants of the Pepper Coast 'are uncircumcised, naked, and are idolaters, having neither religion nor goodness' (*Os Negros d'esta costa nam sam circomcisos, e andam nuus, sam idolatras e he gente sem doutrina nem bondada*) (Pacheco-Mauny: 104; Pacheco-Kimble: 110).

Circumcision was not the custom of the inhabitants of the Mina Coast, but was carried out by peoples who had settled on the coast to the west of Rio Formoso (i.e., one of the estuaries of the Niger River delta):

> The Negroes of this country are idolaters and are circumcised without having any law or reason for their circumcision (Pacheco-Kimble: 125).

> Os Negros d'esta terra sam idolatras e sam circomcisos, sem saberem nem terem ley nem ha causa da sua circoncisam (Pacheco-Mauny: 132).

Pacheco wrote at great length about this practise and about its absence as he described various peoples, seeing it as an important distinguishing factor among them. He accused Islam and Muslims of disseminating the ritual of circumcision, even though he also observed this practise among many pagan peoples. In devoting so much space to this one custom, he saw no reason to give a detailed description of the custom of scarification. This is the more striking as the time in which Pacheco wrote his *Esmeraldo* coincided with the period during which sculptures from Sierra Leone made their way to Europe. The sculptures of African women that decorated ivory saltcellars showed, among other things, scarifications in the form of geometrically laid-out body markings (Bassani, Fagg 1988: 55 – ill. 28, 61 – ill. 35, and catalog no. 32; and fig. 15 in this book). This was not a custom that Europeans hadn't come into contact with before. Although it has to be said that Pacheco Pereira did devote a short passage to scarification in Benin, he simply had no inclination to elaborate on it. In general, he wrote about what was important for missionary, sailing, and commercial activities. Many significant African cultural practices simply escaped his attention or, rather, he considered them unworthy of mention or insignificant from his point of view. He also contradicted himself at times, when he wrote of peoples practicing circumcision, that they lacked a sense of law and goodness, without understanding that this ritual was a reflection of customary law. It can also be said that he saw law and goodness in Christian terms only. While he wrote of Muslims as having law (but not goodness), he viewed pagans as lacking both law and goodness. Idolatry was, in his opinion, unsuited

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to produce either. Pacheco's descriptions are thus the result of his strongly ideologized perception of Africans.

Pacheco's text and opinions can be seen as a rather shallow view of Africans compared to earlier descriptions – not only those of Zurara, who was deeply convinced of the desirability and importance of converting pagans, but also those of Ca da Mosto, Diogo Gomes, and even Valentim Fernandes (a contemporary of Pacheco). These authors showed an open attitude in collecting information about the peoples they encountered. Zurara – who wished to convert pagans – never lost sight of their human nature and was able to feel empathy for their sufferings. In contrast, Pacheco's work is imbued with an unmistakable sense of superiority. Pacheco's text provides what is perhaps the clearest manifestation of the transition in attitudes toward Africans that took place between the contacts that were typical of the 15th century and those that emerged in the first years of the 16th.

The variety of the peoples the Europeans encountered was also reflected in the multiplicity of their languages. From their very first expeditions, the Portuguese attempted to communicate with the Africans, whether they were prisoners taken back to Portugal or in Africa itself. They immediately faced the problem presented by the great number of languages used by the coastal inhabitants. The Portuguese therefore sought to use more convenient languages, those that were known to many peoples. The language of the Mandingo, for example, was such a language spoken on the banks of the Gambia River and to the south of it. But it ceased to be useful in the Gulf of Guinea, with the exception of the Mina Coast, to which Mande merchants traveled from the north.

Ca da Mosto left us an evocative description (which we have seen earlier, but which is worth repeating) of communication through interpreters and of the difficulties they encountered. His interpreters spoke Wolof. When the caravels sailed to the south, toward the coast inhabited by the Serer, communication was still possible (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 49–50 – the Wolof, 78 – the Serer). During the second voyage, when the caravels sailed up the Gambia River, talks took place in the language of the Mandingo, both with the chief whose title was Farisangul, and the chief whose title was Batimansa. During the 11-day sojourn at the latter's residence, when the caravels were anchored on the banks of the Gambia River, many people came on board to offer their merchandise:

> In this way we had each day fresh people of various tongues down at the ships. They are constantly journeying […] up and down the river in their canoes […] (Crone 1937: 69).

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> E a questo modo havevemo ogni di zente nuova a la caravelle, e de diversi lenguazi; e mai non cessava de andar suso e zoso per quell fiume quelle sue almadie (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 100–101).

And thus, either Batimansa's subjects belonged to many linguistic groups, or the area of Bati was a place through which people using different languages traveled. Later negotiations on the banks of the Casamansa River were also conducted in the language of the Mandingo (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 110). But once Ca da Mosto had passed the estuary of the São Domingos River and reached the Rio Grande, the situation changed, even though the Africans approached the caravels in their boats with obviously peaceful intentions. The Venetian merchant wrote: 'I caused my interpreters to speak with them, but none of them could understand what was said, nor could those on the other caravels.' This indicates that although the interpreters spoke not one, but several languages, at the Rio Grande they could not be understood. Ca da Mosto therefore decided to return to Portugal: 'We decided that to continue farther would be useless, for [...] we should be continually encountering new dialects' (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 113; Crone 1937: 76).

Pedro de Sintra (whose 1460 voyage was described by Ca da Mosto), having sailed past the Rio Grande, arrived at the Bissagos Islands, 'upon which they had landed and spoken with the Negros, but had been unable to understand them' (Crone 1937: 84). We already know the story of this expedition, but let's go back to it in the context of the linguistic diversity of the Africans. When this expedition reached Cape Misurado (Mesurado) in today's Liberia, the sailors captured an African man there and sailed back with him to Portugal in order to learn about the inhabitants of this section of the coast. In Lisbon, only one black slave woman was able to communicate with him. Neither spoke in their own language, but in some third one that they both knew (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 125–126).

Other authors have also left us information about the diverse languages of Africa's coastal inhabitants. But the linguistic itinerary described by Ca da Mosto is unequaled among the sources under discussion. The Venetian merchant presented the multiplicity of African languages in connection with space: with the caravel's progression down the coast; reaching more widely known languages, establishing which languages were most useful, making repeated attempts to overcome language barriers. We find out, moreover, that this was not solely the experience of the explorers. In Lisbon, in about 1460, it was common knowledge that black slaves from Africa used many languages and that among those were some known to many groups.

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Among the African cultural aspects observed by the Europeans and mentioned above, the most general in nature was lifestyle (*maneira de viver*, or *modo de viver*). This subject, inclusive of wars and social organization, was discussed in depth by José da Silva Horta (Horta 1991a: 285–324).

João Fernandes, a participant in the expedition of 1445, was the first European mentioned in the sources who was brave enough to disembark from the caravel and remain among the locals in order to learn about the Africans' lifestyle. He spent seven months among the Berbers of the Sahara, after which he returned to Portugal on board a caravel on its way back from another expedition. He gave an account of his observations, which were described in detail by Zurara. The account concerned: the environment of the settlement – the desert, oases, the great heat, difficult access to water; animal husbandry among the Berbers and their nomadic life; spatial organization, living in tents; the absence of supreme authority; the linguistic division of the nomads into *Alarves, Azenegues e Berberes* – i.e., Arabs, Znaga Berbers (known to us as the Azeneg, which include the Schirmeyros Azeneg – fishermen), and nomadic Berbers; wars with black Africans; and slavery (Zurara-Soares: 169–170, 189–192, 439–443). Zurara refers to the experiences of João Fernandes in another part of his chronicle, writing about the absence of fortified settlements and, at greater length, about nourishment – milk, fish, and very scarce meat; about clothes made of cotton; women of dignitaries wearing golden ornaments; and about the nakedness and 'bestiality' of the poor people. These were lifestyle observations of a very wide scope. Zurara was particularly moved by the risks his informer had encountered and his suffering, which resulted from having to ingest highly unpalatable food, and the lack of items that the Portuguese viewed as basic necessities of life (Zurara-Soares: 445–450).

Many elements of João Fernandes's observations can also be found in other descriptions of the lifestyle of Africans, including that of black Africans. Ca da Mosto left us very extensive information about Africans' *maneira del viver*, or *forma de viver*, especially regarding the Wolof and Mandingo. He wrote about their agricultural activities, about the local fauna and flora, hunting, markets, navigation in canoes on coastal waters and rivers, clothing made of cotton and nakedness, types of settlements, family and social organization, power, religion, and war (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 41–61, 67–73 – about the Wolof, 98–111 – about the Mandingo).

Similar topics were described 50 years later by Valentim Fernandes, except that he collected information on the greater number of peoples who inhabited the coast from Ceuta to Sierra Leone. His work was a summary of Portuguese knowledge about West African lifestyles gathered during the 15th and early 16th century.

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However, interest in this type of information – beginning with Zurara, through Ca da Mosto, all the way to Valentim Fernandes – was not typical and did not appear in all the accounts and descriptions that we know. What's more, each of the three above-mentioned authors had different motives for writing about the Africans' way of life. Zurara did so, in the margin of his description of João Fernandes's courage and determination. Ca da Mosto wanted to know as much as possible about his trading partners and was, in addition, desirous to see things that were new and unknown. Valentim Fernandes, in turn, systematically gathered all known information about the peoples of Africa and considered that the description of their lifestyle and beliefs was one of the most important elements of knowledge about Africans. For this reason, the work of Valentim Fernandes can be seen as a precursor to later descriptions of the customs of African peoples, such as the one by Pieter de Marees, from 1602 (Marees 1602; Marees-Dantzig, Jones 1987).

Other authors who wrote about the lifestyle of Africans were guided, most frequently, by practical interest or by possible commercial or political benefits, and to a lesser extent by cognitive motivation. They wished to negotiate and trade with the Africans (Diogo Gomes) or were interested in maintaining contact for the purposes of Christianization (Pacheco). Hieronimus Münzer referred to African lifestyle on the basis of accounts and discussions held in Portugal. The differences between the cognitive and practical aims of these authors are analyzed by Horta (Horta 1991a: 290).

A common element of the two aims was an interest in trade with the Africans. Trade, the Africans' familiarity with it prior to the appearance of the Portuguese on the coast, the existence of markets, trade routes, merchants, the Africans' ability to estimate the value of goods, and their desire to exchange merchandise with the Europeans, were regarded very positively in all types of descriptions and accounts (Horta 1991a: 292–294). Insofar as the authors most often highlighted the great variety of African lifestyles, they stressed the Africans' understanding of the entire sphere of trade. It was shared by the great majority of peoples of the West African coast with whom the Europeans came into contact.

As we know from contemporary anthropological studies, preliterate cultures (also called primitive societies) either do not engage in trade or it is of marginal interest to them. In such societies, the circulation of goods takes place on the basis of gifts, reciprocity, and distribution. It is motivated by the desire to gain prestige, not profit. Such peoples strive to win social recognition, but they don't know how to estimate the convertible value of goods and have no use for money or other means of payment (Polanyi 1957; 1968; Dalton 1961; Meillassoux 1968; 1071; Sahlins 1972; Mauss 1973; Godelier 1995; 2010). In the

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region I have been examining, the situation was completely different. West Africans had for centuries known and practiced various forms of trade – on a local market scale as well as on an inter-regional and long-distance scale. These peoples and their territories were included directly or indirectly in the trading system that encompassed all of West Africa, along with its trans-Saharan links. This is borne out in numerous Arab sources. Where Arabs had no access, it is evident in materials found thanks to archaeological research (Bovill 1958; 1966; Mauny 1961; Wilks 1961, 1962, 1982; Małowist 1964, 1967; Karpiński 1968; Meillassoux 1971; Devisse 1972; Hopkins 1973; Tymowski 1974).

For all these reasons, the Africans were well prepared to consider Portuguese proposals for trade and often took the initiative in this respect. Even if certain African peoples rejected such proposals, they did so not because they failed to understand them, but rather out of fear of assault and looting, which were quite common in the earliest days of Portuguese expeditions. Such refusals were noted by Zurara and Ca da Mosto (Zurara-Soares: 170, 243–244, 365; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 78, 85). On the other hand, Diogo Gomes recorded efforts to mitigate such fears by means of negotiations and gifts (Gomes 1959: 39, 43). For Eustache Delafosse, Antoniotto Usodimare, Duarte Pachero Pereira, Rui de Pina, and especially João de Barros, trade with the Africans and the fact that the Africans were quite adept in it were obvious.

The Portuguese and other Europeans sought trade partners among the rulers of African states and the chiefs of chiefdoms. They considered those people, with justification, to be equipped to organize trade, able to acquire valuable merchandise, and willing to offer it. We know many names of such rulers and chiefs – or their titles, which the Europeans mistook for names. We have often mentioned Budomel, the ruler of Cayor, and Batimansa and Farosangoli (or Farisangul), rulers and chiefs of the Mandingo. Let's also recall Nomimansa, Ulimansa, and Animansa, who were mentioned by Diogo Gomes; the name of the river Casamansa, which originated from the ruler's title of *mansa* (ruler); and also Caramansa, the chief of the village of Aldeia das Duas Partes on the Mina Coast. Valentim Fernandes, in turn, named many chiefs who lived on the São Domingos River. Their existence is corroborated by the log of the ship *Santiago* from 1526. Of course, sources also provide extensive information about the rulers of Benin, a state located to the east of the area of interest to us.

The search for trading partners among African rulers and chiefs allowed the Portuguese to acquire much information about the political organization of individual coastal peoples and about the types and variety of such organizations. In their descriptions, the authors naturally used European terminology as they wrote about African kings, lords, chiefs, and even captains. Fernandes's text contains the notion of *cabeçeira* – a term that is closest to that of 'chief'

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(Fernandes 1951: 82). As I have already mentioned, the descriptions also include the titles of local African rulers. Budomel is in reality the title *Bor Damel*; *Mansa*, in the language of the Mandingo, means 'ruler' and *Faran* means 'chief.' The Serer were referred to as the Barbacin, but the real source of this name was the title *Burba Sine* given to the chief of the Sine chiefdom (Boulègue 1987: 15–16). As a result, at times, the titles of rulers were understood and noted down correctly; at other times, such titles were confused with names. In any case, the Portuguese understood and were fully aware that the Africans created political organizations whose existence was significant for the purpose of establishing contact with them.

The Portuguese also noted that certain societies did not have a centralized organization with a ruler or chief at the top. Fernandes wrote of the populous villages of the Mandingo that 'each of those places has its own king' – *cada huũ daquelles lugares tem seu rey* (Fernandes 1951: 54). Thus they came to know a wide range of different organizations, which differed greatly from their own, European experience (Tymowski 2008b, 2009: 132–134).

Maintaining contacts and trade relations with African rulers and chiefs did not preclude trade with other groups of Africans. The Portuguese traded above all with merchants, i.e, people whose principal activity was trade and who traveled through various regions of Africa in search of special, regional goods (Mauny 1961: 248–249; Hopkins 1973: 58–63; Nowak 1969, 1974), such as *kola* nuts, and who provided other goods of interregional trade, such as salt, gold and copper (Bovill 1958 – gold; Mauny 1961: 321–336, 357–360 – salt, 139–141, 306–313, 360–361 – *kola* nuts, 293–306 – gold, 306–313 – copper; Małowist 1966 – gold; Tymowski 1981: 7–37 – salt; Lovejoy 1980 – *kola* nuts). For centuries this role in West Africa was performed by Dioula (Wangara) merchants, who were of the Mande group. The Europeans established contact with them quite quickly, as can be seen in the case of the gold trade on the Mina Coast, which those merchants reached from the north (Delafosse-Escudier: 26). Valentim Fernandes described fairs on the banks of the São Domingos River, a destination for many multilingual merchants (Fernandes 1951: 68–72).

Such fairs could have been the trading place for meetings with African itinerant merchants, but also with petty occasional traders who came from the nearest vicinity. Such local hucksters were described by Ca da Mosto. The Portuguese bought mainly food from them. The fair was a particularly important place of trade among peoples of a segmentary village system, in which the trading function was not filled by the ruler or chief. In either case, by initiating and continuing trade with the Africans, the Portuguese and other Europeans were becoming increasingly familiar with the social and political cultures, and the structure of local and interregional commerce, of the African peoples with

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whom they negotiated and traded. As a result, the Portuguese learned to distinguish between and adapt to the customs of individual social groups and different peoples and their languages. Thus, during the course of the 15th century – and in the first decade of the 16th century, when their knowledge was summed up – the Portuguese collected much information about the peoples of the African coast.

This did not lead to the entire disappearance of the imaginings and legends surrounding Africa, which had been inherited from the Middle Ages. These persisted in parallel to the knowledge gathered by experience, except that they were transferred onto the areas that lay beyond the coast, to the hinterland, to areas inaccessible to the Portuguese. The African world at which they had arrived, the real world, was thus tamed through experience while the inaccessible world remained the realm of legends and wonders.

To a degree, the Portuguese understood this duality or, at the very least, sensed it, and they sought to find out as much as possible about the African interior. They were interested in the state of Mali, which had been known about since medieval times, knowledge which had seeped through to Christendom from the North African Arabs and Berbers. This knowledge was summarized in Europe in the famous work of Majorcan cartography – the Catalan Atlas by Abraham Cresques, from 1375 (Roncière 1924: plates 7 and 11; Cresques-Grosjean 1978). In addition, from the Berbers the Portuguese learned about trans-Saharan trade routes, Saharan settlements such as Wadan, the salt mine in Idjil and, later, Timbuktu, about which they had known earlier from the Catalan Atlas. When the Portuguese reached the Mande peoples who lived on the banks of the Gambia or Casamansa rivers, and met their chiefs, who held the Malian titles of *mansa* or *faran*, they discovered through them the existence further inland of a ruler superior to those chiefs, whom the locals referred to by the title of Bor Melli (Gomes 1959: 38; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 98). The Portuguese identified this figure as the ruler of Mali and, in 1482–83, they sent a deputation to him (Barros-Cidade: 123; Blake 1967: 33; Levitzion 1973: 32–33). It did not lead to the expected establishment of permanent contact. This attempt by João II to establish trade with Mali – this time through the intermediary of the Jolof state – also proved unsuccessful.

The interior of the continent thus remained an unknown area, and real (but unverifiable) information was mixed with the entirely fantastic. Ca da Mosto wrote about Timbuktu and Mali and, additionally, recounted an old legend (or story) about the silent trade between the merchants of Mali and the peoples who extracted gold. This was an itinerant theme, which had been known about since classical antiquity from the works of Herodotus, and was later adopted by Arab authors (Bovill 1929–1930: 27–38; Farias 1974; Karpiński 1974: 145–156).

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As can be seen in the text of Ca da Mosto, who had heard this story from the Wolof, it was also making the rounds by oral transmission between various African peoples and this is how it reached the Wolof. The credibility of the story about silent trade is debatable and unverifiable. We know with certainty that the rulers of Mali did not conquer the peoples who extracted gold, as such a conquest would have entailed the flight of the latter and the cessation of gold extraction. We also know that the itinerant Dioula (Wangara) merchants reached the gold-bearing areas of Bure and Bambuk.

Similarly, Diogo Gomes mixed real information with stories that were unverifiable to the same degree. He wrote of the Portuguese asking prisoners who had been captured on the Saharan coast for the road to Timbuktu. He considered that they said 'many untruthful things' – *dixerunt ei plura mendatia*. Gomes added that, according to what he had been told, along their route these caravans:

> came against a great mountain which is called Abofur mountain [most probably the Saharan Adrar mountains] and was said to be inhabited by a strange race of people. Men had the face of dogs and long tails and were covered with pelage, while women were very beautiful and reasonable. They spoke many other such apparent lies.
>
> [...] inuenerunt in via montem magnum qui vocatur Montanha de Abofur, et dixerunt quod illa serra est populata de gente mirabili ita ut masculi habent vultum canis et magnum caudam et pilosi, et mulieres pulcherrimae magni sensus etc. Et multa alia quae videbantur mendatia (Gomes 1959: 21; Sintra 2002: 58).

Thus, Diogo Gomes related this information to introduce some variation to his account, but didn't believe it. Matters were different with Antoniotto Usodimare, who, in a letter written in December 1455, informed his creditors of his arrival at the Gambia River and about the profits he expected to make. In addition to much credible information, he included some that was purely fantastic. As a matter of fact, he himself thought it quite strange. He had been told not only of elephants and unicorns (presumably rhinos), but also of people with tails who ate their own children and who – of course – lived in the African hinterland (Usodimare 1971; 1991; 1999).

Such information did not entirely disappear and continued to surface at the beginning of the 16th century. There is some in the work of Duarte Pacheco Pereira, who wrote of the land of Toom, also in the African interior, neighboring the Mandingo Kingdom, whose inhabitants had dogs' heads with tails to match. According to Pacheco, such dog-headed people also lived in other areas

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of the African interior, where silent trade was practiced. Mandingo merchants supposedly carried on such trade with 'monstrous folk' – *monstruosa gente* (Pacheco-Mauny: 66).

It is difficult to ascertain the reason for such fantastic stories persisting for so long. They did so despite the fact that the above authors knew that one of the Portuguese expeditions' greatest achievements had been the accumulation of factual knowledge about foreign peoples, gained through direct experience. Moreover, these stories were repeated despite the fact that some of the authors clearly distanced themselves from them and saw them as the product of overly fertile imaginations or as downright lies. Perhaps these tales weren't believed by either the authors or their readers, but were used to make their accounts more entertaining. Alternatively, they could have been an expression of the awareness that, despite the success of the African expeditions, beyond this newly explored world lay another one, unknown, unexplored, and mysterious.

We could view this strange information as belonging to an entirely different category than descriptions of reality. But even lived experience and its results raised a fundamental question for the explorers, the readers of their accounts, and Europeans in general. Given that the peoples of Africa were so different from Europeans (15th-century authors used the term 'Christians'), and that Africans were so different from one another, how was one to interpret the obvious and incontrovertible fact of human diversity? What were the 'boundaries,' so to speak, of humanity?

To this question Zurara offered a faith-based answer, by writing that 'we are all the generation of the sons of Adam,' and 'their humanity that maketh mine' (*mas a sua humanidade constuange a minha*) (Zurara-Soares: 145; Zurara-Beazley: 81). He also made a reference to Aristotle. On the one hand he raised the question, but on the other he shied from answering it, when he wondered:

> But why do I say so, when I know that we are all the sons of Adam, composed of the same elements, and that we all receive a soul as reasonable beings? True it is that, in some bodies, the instruments are not so good for producing virtues as they are in others, to whom God by his grace hath granted such power; and when men lack the first principles on which the higher ones depend, they lead a life little less than bestial. For into three modes is the life of men divided, as saith the Philosopher. The first are those who live in contemplation, leaving on one side all other worldly matters and only occupying themselves in praying and contemplating, and those he calls demi-gods. And the second are those who live in cities, improving their estate and trading with one another. And the third are those who live in the deserts, removed from all conversation of men, who,

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> because they have not perfectly the use of reason, live as beasts live. […] But yet these last have their passions like other reasonable creatures; as love, hate, hope, fear, and the other twelve which all of us naturally have; to which each one of us setteth in use more or less, according to the grace he hath of God […] (Zurara-Beazley: 109–110).

> Mas para que falo eu [em] estas coisas, visto que sei que somos todos filhos de Adão compostos de uns mesmos elementos, e que todos recebemos alma como criaturas racionais. Certo é, que os instrumentos em alguns corpos não são tão dispostos para seguir as virtudes como são outros a que Deus por Graça, outorgou tal poderio, e, carecendo dos primeiros princípios de que dependem os outros mais altos, fazem vida pouco menos de bestas. Porém, em três modos se reparte a vida dos homens, segundo diz o Filósofo. Os primeiros, são aqueles que vivem em contemplação, deixando todas as outras coisas do Mundo; sòmente se ocupam em orar e contemplar, e a estes chama ele „meios deuses". E os segundos, são os que vivem nas cidades, aproveitando seus bens e tratando uns com outros. E os terceiros, são os que vivem nos ermos, afastados de toda convivência, os quais, porque não hão perfeitamente o uso da razão, vivem assim como bestas […]. Mas, todavia, hão seus padecimentos como as outras criaturas racionais como [seja] amor, e ódilo, e esperança, e temor, e assim as outras doze [paixões] que todos naturalmente havemos, das quais cada um usa, mais ou menos segundo a graça que tem de Deus (Zurara-Soares: 193–195).

Thus, for Zurara, what predetermined humanity was the creation of all people by God, who provided each person with an immortal soul and mind, a common origin from Adam, and an array of the same feelings. Differences were due to the efficiency of the mind and to social functions performed by individuals. This shared state justified, and even mandated, the conversion of Africans to Christianity. According to Zurara, such conversion was easier in the case of the 'black Moors,' who were less entrenched in their Muslim faith than were the 'white Moors,' and of pagans (Zurara-Soares: 149–150).

Ca da Mosto had a practical approach to the question of humanity. The determining factors for him were 'a human figure' and the use of speech. The Venetian merchant recounted the story of a gold digger who had been captured by the Malians during silent trade. The prisoner didn't say a word once and shortly thereafter died. In the words of Ca da Mosto: 'Some think that having a human figure, they (the gold diggers) must equally be endowed with speech' – *Altri tien pur che havendo forma humana, che i debiano parlar* (Ca da

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Mosto-Leporace: 34). The inhabitants of Africa had a human form, which led to an automatic recognition of them as human beings. Similarly, the Africans recognized Europeans as human beings because they were shaped like humans. This is obvious in the description of the expedition of 1444, when African boats approached the caravel of Gil Eanes and the Portuguese, at first hidden on orders from their captain, suddenly leaned out to see the Africans. The latter felt greater fright at the sight of other people than of the caravel and began to flee. Both sides saw each other as people on the basis of the 'human figure.'

The third reason for which the Portuguese explorers had no doubt about their shared humanity with the Africans was their desire to possess African women.

Thus the Portuguese took various criteria into account when considering Africans. The first were the appearance and speech of the Africans, which the Portuguese instinctively and spontaneously recognized as human. These aspects undoubtedly also influenced the Africans' response with regard to the Europeans. The second were the messages from the Bible to do with the creation of man and the diversity of languages, which allowed the Portuguese to see in pagans the objects of missionary work. The third were philosophical criteria concerning the concept of man, which originated in classical antiquity.

In most cases, these criteria satisfied both sides. The Africans, on seeing the arrivals' unusual abilities, attributed these to divine intervention, but they took the Europeans themselves for human beings, not for ghosts or deities. Similarly, even though they were encountering a great variety of different peoples, the Europeans saw Africans as people: from primitive hunters and fishermen, to agricultural peoples who knew crafts; from very poor people to merchants and rulers who traded in gold and slaves; from people who went about naked to those dressed in refined, locally made cotton garments; from those having a ruler to those who had no superior authority.

It may seem obvious today that during the contacts between the Portuguese and the Africans, both assumed they were dealing with human beings. But in the 15th and early 16th centuries there were also other reactions during the meeting of different cultures. Such was the case in America, when Europeans arrived in the Caribbean islands and came into contact with the local Indians, whose humanity they frequently refused to acknowledge. But there the reverse was true as well. For example: the peoples of the Aztec state, whose predictions of catastrophes are analyzed by Ryszard Tomicki (Tomicki 1990: 11, 95), associated the arrival of the Spaniards with their myth about the god Quetzalcoatl; according to George Vaillant, the Spaniards were for the Aztecs the earthly representatives of unearthly forces (Vaillant 1951: 240); and the

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centuries-old myths of the Andes and Mexican Indians about the Spanish conquest are analyzed, in turn, by Nathan Wachtel (Wachtel 1967: 561, 578–579). Such a situation didn't arise in Africa. Moreover, the Portuguese didn't try to limit the concept of humanity; to the contrary, contacts with the 'other' had broadened it, and this was recognized and accepted.

In the Portuguese texts, there is only one example of hesitation in defining the bounds of humanity. It is in Pacheco's work, which mentions, in two places, the peculiar and surprising species of people who lived in the hinterland of Sierra Leone and the African interior in the vicinity of Benin. Of Sierra Leone, Pacheco wrote as follows:

> Here, as well, are wild men whom the Ancients called satyrs. They are covered with hairs almost as coarse as the bristles of a pig; they seem human and lie with their women after our fashion, but instead of speaking, they shout when they are hurt. As they dwell in the fastnesses of this Serra they can rarely be captured except when very young. I omit many other things concerning them in order to avoid prolixity (Pacheco-Kimble: 98).

> [...] tambem haquy homeẽs saluajes a que os antiguos chamaram satiros, e sam todos cubertos de hum cabello ou sedas quasi tam asperas como de porco, e estes parecem criatura humana e husam ho coyto com suas molheres como nós husamos com as nossas, e em vez de falarem, gritam quando lhe fazem mal; e por que estes andam na maior espessura d'esta serra, poucas vezes os podem thomar se nam em sendo moços pequenos; muitas outras cousas se poderiam dizer d'elles, que por nam fazer longuo sermon leixo de escrever (Pacheco-Mauny: 84).

In a passage concerning the area of Benin, he wrote:

> In the mountains and woods of this region dwell savage men whom the negroes of Beny call *oosaa*. They are very strong and are covered with bristles, like pigs; their figure is entirely human except that instead of speaking, they shout. I have heard their shouts at night and possess the skin of one of those savages (Pacheco-Kimble: 127).

> Nesta terra ha huũs homeẽs saluajens que abitam nos montes e aruoredos desta Regiam, aos quaes chamam os negros do Beny 'oosaa,' e sam muito fortes, e sam cubertos de sedas como porcos; tudo teem de criatura humana, se nam que em lugar de falar, gritam; e eu ouuy já de noyte os

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> gritos d'elles e tenho hũa pelle de hum d'estes salvajens (Pacheco-Mauny: 134).

Considering the areas inhabited by these 'satyrs' and their Benin name, it would seem that the work's publisher, Raymond Mauny, was justified in his assumption that the author was describing West African chimpanzees – *Pan troglodytes verus* (Pacheco-Mauny: footnotes 176 and 282).

This mistake by the author in his delimitation of the boundaries of humanity was perhaps due to the ambiguity, arbitrariness, and subjectivity of the criteria he adopted, and to the fact that he had not seen those creatures himself but had been informed of them, and had only heard their voices. This isolated case had no influence on Portuguese opinions. Of much greater impact were the concepts of bestiality and barbarism that distinguished certain of the peoples or social groups encountered in Africa. Writing about them, the authors contrasted such bestiality with culture – Christian for the most part, but not only.

Horta wrote at length about bestiality and barbarism (Horta 1991a: 255–258, 287–289). The term 'bestiality' emerged at the earliest stage of the expeditions – in the 1430s. In 1436, Pope Eugene IV issued a bull concerning the conversion of pagans, including those of the Canary Islands, and the Portuguese rights to this mission. The bull's *narratio* was based on the supplication of King Dom Duarte, drawn up with the participation of the Infant Henrique and sent to the Holy See. It is no doubt that this supplication is the origin of the Portuguese view of bestiality, which justified the mission. In the papal bull, we read that the islands were inhabited by savage people who led the life of beasts, who walked about naked, and who knew no religion, laws, or social organization (Witte 1953: 707–709, 715–718; *Descobrimentos portugueses* 1944, vol. 1, 350–352; *Monumenta Henricina* 1963: vol. 5, no. 120: 255–256; comments in Zurara-Bourdon: 224, footnote 1; Russell 2009: 124, footnote 22–23; O'Callaghan 2013 [1st ed. 1993]: 176–178; and Horta 1991a).

Zurara also used the term 'bestiality.' Writing of the inhabitants of the Canary Islands, he repeated the above attributes and added new ones. In his view, the Canarians went about naked, were shameless, knew no laws, had no wheat or vegetables, and ate only fruit and herbs. Moreover, they had no faith. 'They are very bestial' (*são muito bestiais*) (Zurara-Soares: 399, 461, 465).

Zurara also applied his views of beastly life to certain peoples of the West African coast. When he described, with concern and sympathy, the first transports of slaves brought to Lagos, he consoled himself and the reader with the reflection that the slaves were better off this way. After all, they now had the

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chance to be baptized. In addition, they had arrived in a land of plenty and prosperity, whereas previously:

> they lived like beasts, without any custom of reasonable beings – for they had no knowledge of bread or wine and they were without the covering of clothes, or the lodgment of houses; and worse than all, through the great ignorance that was in them, in that they had no understanding of good, but only knew how to live in bestial sloth (Zurara-Beazley: 84–85, see the Portuguese text in Chapter 9, about slaves in Portugal).

The Berbers, who had hosted João Fernandes, were 'almost savage people.' Fernandes endured horrible suffering upon eating their food (Zurara-Soares: 179). And lastly, writing of various peoples in the summary to his account, Zurara stated that:

> one may discern their great bestiality, for if they had a particle of reason they would follow nature and cover those parts only by its shewing ought to be covered, for we see how naturally in each of those shameful parts it placeth a circle of hair in proof that it wished to hide them (Zurara-Beazley: 231–232).

> [...] se pode conhecer sua grande bestialidade, pois, se algum pouco de razão entre eles houvesse, seguiriam a Natureza, cobrido aquelas partes sòmente que ela mostrou que deviam ser cobertas, pois vemos, naturalmente, que em cada um daqueles lugares vergonhosos pôs a Natureza cerco de cabelos (Zurara-Soares: 442–443).

And so, 'bestiality,' as defined in the papal bull and Zurara's chronicle, consisted not only of nakedness (or of covering only private parts), but also lack of shame and religion; lack of a sense of good and evil and the absence of laws; a lifestyle without houses or the nourishment of bread and wine, something Margarido had drawn attention to (Zurara-Soares: 151, 442; Margarido 1984: 529). In the invocation to his chronicle, Zurara added the term 'barbarism' to his definition of bestiality. This term was borrowed from classical antiquity, but was defined in terms consistent with medieval beliefs. The author used it in reference to peoples who 'since the beginning of the world hath never seen the divine light' – *daqueles bárbaras nações* [...] *cuja antiga generação desde o começo do Mundo nunca viu luz divinal* (Zurara-Beazley: 7; Zurara-Soares: 33–34).

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The use by the Portuguese (and other Europeans) of the terms 'bestiality' and 'barbarism,' in their extended meaning could be due to yet one more reason. The Portuguese saw and described the above-mentioned lifestyle of the African peoples but they had difficulties in creating a terminology to describe their observations.

Tarikhu Farrar provides synthetic treatment of European opinions about West Africans from about 1450 to 1800 in an interesting article, albeit one that makes selective use of sources. In it the author draws attention to the fact that, during this period, Europeans were neither familiar with nor did they 'think in terms of progress and cultural evolution with the concomitant stages of development' (Farrar 1992: 275). Thus, if they observed nakedness, poverty and want, poor food, the absence or small scale of state organizations, they had no terms other than 'barbarism,' 'bestiality,' and 'savagery' to define such phenomena. A closer observation of African peoples and the differences that existed between them gave the Portuguese and other Europeans much to think about. The notions of backwardness and stages of development arose much later, however (Farrar 1992: 259).

The experience gained during the African expeditions inclined the Portuguese to reconsider the definition of 'bestiality.' In the view of many authors, this term turned out to be unfit to be applied to all African peoples and the traits of their organizations and lifestyles. After all, they had encountered many peoples whose political organization, ceremonies of power, intricate social divisions, and knowledge of trade, cotton cultivation, weaving, and sculpture could not be described using the term bestial. All this new information instead had beneficial, practical implications because it made possible effective contacts with potential trade partners. The Europeans also gained a broader outlook, which affected their view of Africans, of humanity, and of the complexity of the world they had discovered during their overseas expeditions.

The term 'bestiality' was not abandoned, however, and changes in its use took several forms. Firstly, it was reserved for certain peoples or some behaviors shown by Africa's inhabitants. Secondly, it began to be used selectively with reference to poorer segments of a given people who stood lower on the social hierarchy, whereas the ruling strata or merchant groups were not called thus. The third use of the term 'bestiality' (and 'barbarism') was applied to those Africans who remained pagans.

Diogo Gomes, writing of the Azeneg and citing the opinions of his predecessors, observed that 'they lead a bestial life and eat almost raw meat and milk' – *vivunt vita bestiali et comedunt carnes quasi crudas ac lac* [...] (Gomes 1959: 19, 21; Sintra 2002: 58). The simplicity of nourishment, the absence of cooked food, justified the judgment of their lifestyle as 'bestial.' Ca da Mosto noted the

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Canarians, while waging war, 'slaying each other like beasts' – *e amazasse como bestie* and, moreover, they went about naked, lived in caves or mountain caverns, and 'they have no faith' – *non hano fede* (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 20; Crone 1937: 13). This last statement did not keep him from calling the Canarians 'idolaters.' This severe judgment was most probably colored by earlier Portuguese opinions. Ca da Mosto didn't use this term in connection with the 'Ruler of Senegal' (the state of the Jolof) or Budomel, the ruler of Cayor, but stressed their abilities as rulers, their command of obedience among their subjects, as well as the way they organized ceremonies, conducted trade, and their interesting manner of conversation. He did, however, call certain customs of the Wolof bestial and cruel, above all their manner of warfare (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 48). Thus, for Ca da Mosto, in this instance war and mutual slaughter equated to bestiality i.e., it was a facet of the political organization of the Wolof and did not apply to the entirety of their lifestyle and organization.

Ca da Mosto was one of the first authors to describe differences between various Africans belonging to the same people. About the Wolof, he wrote:

> Almost all of them walk naked continually, except that they wear a piece of goat skin cut like trousers, with which they cover their private parts. But the men and anyone of any standing wear thin cotton shirts (Crone 1937: 31).

> [...] squasi tutti vano nudi continualmente, salvo che portano uno coro de carva messo in forma de una braga, con che se copreno le lor vergogne. Ma li segnori e quelli che pono alguna cossa, vesteno camise de gottonine (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 45).

Meals were also eaten in different ways. The rulers did so in seclusion, while ordinary people 'gather to eat in groups of ten to twelve, placing amongst themselves a basket with victuals for which everyone reaches with their hands.' This was not to the Venetian's liking: 'They eat in the ground like animals,' he wrote (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 58).

In this way a differentiation emerged in the descriptions of various African groups and their lifestyle – the bestiality of ordinary people was contrasted with the relative refinement and better customs of the rulers and dignitaries. Nakedness was not a way of being for all Africans, but only for some and in contrast to those who covered their bodies. The view that Africans lived without rules or principles proved inconsistent with reality. The Portuguese observed African peoples who had established states or chiefdoms where customary law existed, compliance with which was guarded by the rulers, where courts and a justice administration system existed.

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However, accusations of bestiality lasted and emerged with new strength at the turn of the 15th century. This characterization was applied not only to individual peoples, such as the Canarians, but even to Ethiops, i.e., all Africans.

In a letter from about 1495, Hieronimus Münzer, who gathered much information about the expeditions to Africa during his travel to Portugal, wrote of the Canarians as a very bestial people (*Erant autem populus multum bestialis*). About the Berbers who lived to the north of the Senegal estuary, he claimed that they led a bestial life (*vivunt vita bestiali*) (Münzer 1854: 348, 351). A sailing guide published in 1509 but disseminated prior to this date in the form of manuscript copies, is quoted by J. Horta and contains the following view in connection with the Ethiops: 'Almost beasts (although they are) similar to human beings but excluded from the divine cult' – *quase bestas em semelhança humana alienados do culto divino* (Horta 1991a: 256). This statement was adopted and repeated word for word by Pacheco in the prologue to his description, when he wrote about the Ethiops (i.e., generally about Africans) that they are 'Ethiopians who were almost beasts in human form' – *quasy bestas em semelhança humana* (Pacheco-Kimble 1937: 2). In the Pacheco-Mauny edition, which contains the Portuguese text and its translation into French, the prologue was not included. The Portuguese quotes are from Carvalho (Carvalho 1983: 413, 430; Horta 1991a: 256, footnotes 188–190).

Those authors associated bestiality with the paganism of the peoples they described and their refusal to accept Christianity. The statement about their lack of laws and sense of good and evil seems to be concerned with the absence of a Christian sense of morality, rather than any legal system. It was considered that no morality other than the Christian one existed.

The sources that portray Africans are not only in written form. Depictions of them were also made, most often of those who ended up as slaves in Europe (Devisse, Mollat 1979a, 1979b; and fig. 19 in this book). But there were also, albeit rare, depictions of Africans made *in situ*, in Guinea. In 1505–1506, Baltasar Springer, a German merchant and an agent of the house of Wesler from Augsburg, traveled to Africa and India. His account became the basis of Hans Burgkmair's woodcut illustrations that represent peoples of Africa and Asia encountered by Springer. The illustrations were made in 1508, and a second version in 1509. The images, with accompanying pieces of text, were laid out in keeping with the traveler's itinerary (Leitch 2009: 143). The first of them represents a man, a woman, and two children from Guinea. The inscription says 'In Gennea.' In other versions of the woodcuts, the figures of the man, woman, and children are presented separately (see fig. 1) and were signed 'Gennea' (next to the man's figure the inscription is accompanied by a sign of abbreviation).

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The exact placement of this scene on the West African coast remains in doubt. The members of the depicted family are fishermen and gatherers who are from either the Cabo Verde area or today's Guinea-Bissau coast. In my opinion, the description indicates that they were perhaps inhabitants of the coast from the vicinity of today's Bissau. The figures are shown naked, the woman and children with necklaces with beads, and both adults with bracelets. This is consistent with part of Springer's description, according to which:

> they are all black like black Moors [Negroes] […]. The so-called Land of the black Moors [Negroes] extends over a thousand four hundred miles, and the local inhabitants go naked, wear golden bracelets on their arms and legs […].
>
> […] und alle waren Schwartz wie die Mohren […]. Das gennant moreland ist m /cccc/ meyl weyt wöliche ganz nackent und gulden ring an armen und füssen tragen […] (Springer 1509: fol. 2; Hirschberg 1962: plates 2 and 10 along with the descriptions; Leitch 2009: 140, 156).

Burgkmair's woodcuts, repeatedly copied and made in different versions, attracted great interest as late as the 17th and 18th centuries (Massing 1995; Leitch 2009, 2010). They contributed on the one hand to the Europeans' growing familiarity with the image of the Africans from Guinea and, on the other, through that image's dissemination, to the emergence of a stereotype of African appearance, including nakedness, which was erroneously perceived as universal in Africa.

In the formation of Portuguese opinions (and of other Europeans gathering information about expeditions to Africa), one can distinguish two tendencies and variations. The first tendency is represented by the majority of texts and can be seen as preponderant. It consisted of the initial accusation of bestiality and barbarism applied to the earliest peoples they encountered. These generalizations and judgments were mitigated by the recognition of a shared humanity with these peoples and hopes for their Christianization. In addition, these views changed shape gradually as Europeans encountered many other Africans, and they stopped treating them as a uniform and undifferentiated population. During the course of the 15th century, the Portuguese gathered much information about various types of social organization, occupation, and customs among the peoples of Africa. The allegation of bestiality was revised. It either disappeared from the accounts of those authors who had personally come into contact with Africans, negotiated with their rulers, exchanged

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goods, and admired the refinement of the local art, or was shifted in the direction of ordinary Africans who had no close contact with the Portuguese, unlike their rulers, chiefs, and African merchants.

Writers who represented the second tendency could not deny the existence among Africans of social and political organizations, the effectiveness of their actions, the Africans' trading skills, etc. But they allowed their judgmental views concerning paganism and the Ethióps' disinclination to accept Christianity to prevail negatively over this knowledge.

The most profound consequence of the meeting between the Portuguese and the Africans was the redefinition of their concept of humanity. As a result of the explorations and encounters of such numerous and different peoples, the Europeans found it necessary to reassess the very nature of humanity. This did not undermine the Christian concept of humanity, but placed before it new and complicated challenges. The first tendency that I referred to as predominant lasted during the entire 15th century as the accumulation of new experience made it possible to become aware of the diversity and complexity of humanity. This awareness made it possible to notice, to get to know and, to a certain extent, to accept the 'other.'

The second tendency, signaled by several texts from the turn of the 15th century, led to the conclusion that the desired outcome was the adoption by other peoples of the values of Christian Europe, and that diversity should give way to uniformity. This duality in the attitudes of Europeans in relation to Africans closes the period of the first contacts, during which rapidly expanding knowledge, and the fluctuation of judgments that went with it, precluded the emergence of stereotypes, only the beginnings of which are discernable during this period.

In the material I gathered, the first signs of stereotypical views of Africans can be seen in the work of Pacheco Pereira and in Burgkmair's woodcuts. In João de Barros's work, which appeared three decades later, a strong sense of superiority is evident when the author places in Caramansa's mouth words about the barbarism of the Africans and their country, and when he describes the ceremonial attire of the African ruler's retinue as comical. We can see this as testimony of the evolution that took place in the first decades of the 16th century and which closed the era of the first contacts.

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CHAPTER 13

Africans' Perceptions of Europeans

In his concise synthesis of African attitudes toward Europeans, David Northrup looks at a long period from 1450 to 1850 (Northrup: 2002). I find that it may be useful to divide these 400 years into sub-periods for more detailed examination. I have chosen for this book the beginnings of contact between Africans and Europeans. While a wide variety of European sources attest to European opinions about Africans during this early period (Horta 1991a: 213–215), the opinions held by Africans are more difficult to recover. The cultures of the West African coast in the 15th century did not know the written word. Memory and oral transmission (complemented by ceremony, art, sounds of drums, music and gestures) were predominant in interpersonal contacts and in the commemoration of events. In the subject matter of this chapter, however, present-day local oral tradition does not reach as far back as the 15th and early 16th centuries. This has been shown by the studies of the oral tradition of the Gold Coast – the Mina Coast – conducted by Harvey Feinberg and Christopher DeCorse (Feinberg 1989; DeCorse 1992; 2001), although future discoveries of elements of oral tradition or oral transmission that are unknown today can't be ruled out. Research in other parts of the West African coast warrants such hopes, as is borne out by the findings by Horta and Freire (Horta 2013; Horta, Freire 2013; Freire 2016). West African art provides an additional source of information for the study of Africans' perceptions about Europeans. I intend to make use of such sources here.

The rich literature written about the early Portuguese expeditions to West Africa includes few accounts of the opinions of Africans themselves, and those that do exist are devoted to specific aspects of this question. In his work about the emergence of the São Jorge da Mina castle, Hair analyzed the pronouncements, opinions, and arguments of the local chief Caramansa during the negotiations with Diogo de Azambuja (Hair 1994a: 16–34). Kathy Curnow examined a few examples of African art from Sierra Leone and Benin in this regard (Curnow 1990). Writing from the African standpoint she introduced the term 'other' to describe the Portuguese. I draw upon her approach and the concept of the Portuguese as 'others.'

My aim in this chapter is to examine all sources – written and iconographic, African and European – relevant to the subject, and to compare the results; to determine the credibility of those sources, which will be the greater when they corroborate each other; and to seek to assess the opinion of Africans about

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Europeans and how these evolved from the 15th century to the beginning of the 16th in the entire area in question.

European texts that relate to utterances made by Africans are primarily accounts that were written by eyewitnesses to various events – merchants, sailors and explorers – who traveled to Africa and came into contact with Africans. Those accounts are concerned with different parts of the West African coast and different groups of Africans. The eyewitnesses included the Venetian merchant Alvise da Ca da Mosto, the Portuguese knight Diogo Gomes, and the merchant Eustache Delafosse from Bruges. Gomes and Ca da Mosto wrote about the Wolof and Serer peoples, as well as about the Mande from the Gambia and Casamansa regions. The Venetian merchant added some information about the peoples of Sierra Leone. The information provided by Delafosse concerns the inhabitants of the Mina Coast. In addition, statements made by Africans can be found in the chronicles of discoveries. Zurara wrote about the Azeneg, the Wolof, and the Serer; Rui de Pina about negotiations on the Mina Coast and about the arrival of the Portuguese in Benin. Later authors – Valentim Fernandes, Duarte Pacheco Pereira, and João de Barros – drew on previous works and added information they had collected themselves.

The comments made by Africans contained in all these sources are based on what the Europeans were told by interpreters, on how those translations were understood, and on how and why they were recorded for a European readership. Naturally, reports by eyewitnesses and participants in talks are a more reliable rendition of the Africans' statements. Europeans noted down what the interpreters told them but, in addition, they were able to observe the gestures and facial expressions of their African interlocutors (Russell 1995a). They could thus better understand what was said to them, and with what intent. In contrast, the works of chroniclers are indirect accounts on several levels: the records they contain of African articulations are based on what the interpreters had said; what the Portuguese explorers had understood; and what they had told the chroniclers.

We can refer to another source besides European records of African opinions. Some Africans expressed their impressions about the European arrivals in the form of art. In two regions of the West African coast – Sierra Leone, and the state of Benin, which existed in the territory of present-day Nigeria – sculptures representing the Portuguese were made from the late 15th century (Fagg 1959; Bassani, Fagg 1988; Plankensteiner, ed. 2007; Mark 2007). In Sierra Leone, the sculptors belonged to the group of people from the coastal area, whom the Portuguese referred to as Sapes or Sapi. This term included the Temne, Bulon, Baga, and Nalu groups (Mark 2016: 98; Malacco 2018: 58). They carved ivory sculptures with the intention of selling them to the Portuguese. In

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Benin, a state created by the Edo (Bini) people, the sculptures were made by specialist craftsmen who were organized into a guild, which was supervised by the *oba* (ruler) and his officials. These sculptures were produced for the purposes of the *oba*'s court and were used to legitimize his power.

The direct nature of their author's artistic expression makes these sources especially valuable. Any critique of these sources by historians must take into account the distinct language (or 'code') of the artwork; the political, social, and economic circumstances in which the work emerged; and the different situations of the two regions where the sculptures originated (Vansina 1984).

On the basis of these sources we can analyze opinions expressed by cultural and linguistic groups who lived on specific parts of the African coast. Secondly, we can ascribe these opinions to people who occupied various social positions. And finally, we can discuss the possibility of generalizing, on the basis of these opinions, and recognizing them (or not) collectively as the expression of the West Africans' opinions (Tymowski 2015).

The first encounters between the two sides – which took place in the 1430s and 1440s – were startling, sporadic and short-term, and were marked by aggression on the part of the Portuguese. Astonishment, fear, and the desire to avoid contact predominated among those Africans who had experienced these encounters. At the same time, the Africans attempted to understand, and sought an explanation for, who the arrivals were, and the purpose of their unfamiliar objects and tools. Both Africans and Europeans had no doubt that they were dealing with other human beings, as opposed to spirits, specters, or beasts. The chronicler Zurara expressed this view on several occasions (Zurara-Soares: 145, 176, 193, 336, 364). Moreover, the intent to convert Africans to Christianity – one of the main motives that shaped the policies of the Infante Dom Henrique – arose from the conviction that Africans were human beings, notwithstanding their many cultural differences.

Europeans had known about sub-Saharan Africans for a long time. Black people and Berbers had been a familiar sight throughout the Mediterranean region since the Age of Antiquity (Snowden 1970; Bieżuńska-Małowist, Małowist 1987: 46, 55–57, 320–324). In contrast, direct contact with the Portuguese and other Europeans was an entirely new experience for the black communities who inhabited the coast of West Africa south of the Senegal River estuary. The Wolof, the Western Mande, and perhaps the Serer, may have sporadically encountered white people, Arab or Berber merchants, or *marabouts*. Ca da Mosto confirms the presence of Arab and Berber marabouts at the court of Budomel, the ruler of the Wolof-Cayor state (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 56–57). But peoples who lived along the coast further south had not had such contact. However,

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all the above groups had no doubt that the Portuguese they encountered were human beings, not spirits or other unexplained phenomena.

In the middle of the 1440s, the Portuguese attempted to establish peaceful contact and engage in trade, but the Africans, mindful of the earlier Portuguese attacks, rejected their initial offers (Zurara-Soares: 365). After a few years, the Wolof did manage to come to an agreement with the Portuguese (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 49). Peoples in other areas of the coast, however, continued to refuse contact. The Serer, who lived to the south of Cabo Verde, around the estuary of the Sine-Saloum, and who were the neighbors of the Wolof, were especially persistent in rejecting Portuguese advances. In 1446, Nuno Tristão and most of his caravel's crew perished in battle with them (Zurara-Soares: 485–487). A year later, in 1447, the Danish knight Valarte was killed there (Zurara-Soares: 542–543). Eight years later, in 1455, Ca da Mosto's attempt at contact was also rebuffed. The Serer from the Sine-Saloum River killed an interpreter who had been sent to them. When the Venetian merchant arrived at the estuary of the Gambia River, he recorded a very interesting disclosure by the Africans (these were probably Niominka fishermen who sailed along the coast and who were of the Serer group). This was conveyed by interpreters, following talks that had ensued when the boats of the Africans had approached the caravel, without any contact on land. Ca da Mosto wrote:

> they replied that they had had news of our coming and of our trade with the negroes of Senega who, if they sought our friendship, could not but be bad men, for they firmly believed that we Christians ate human flesh, and that we only bought negroes to eat them: that for their part they did not want our friendship on any terms, but sought to slaughter us all (Crone 1937: 60).

> La riposta soa fo che nel passado de nui i avea habuto qualche noticia e del nostro praticar con quelli Negri de Senega, i quali non podea esser salvo che cativi homini in voler nostra amistade, perché lor teniano per fermo che nui altri christiani manzavemo carne humana e che non compravemo Negri salvo per manzarli, e che per questo non voleano nostra amistade per algun modo del mondo, ma anche ne volea amazar tuti (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 85).

Ca da Mosto's account is the earliest such extensive and credible record of African perceptions of Europeans from the period before the establishment of trade. This description indicates that news about the Europeans had been spreading in Africa and had been conveyed from one people to

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others. Some knowledge about the Europeans, even if it was negative in nature, often preceded the first contacts with the arrivals. Such dissemination of information is confirmed in the description of Diogo Gomes, who wrote about the Azeneg: *quia gentes illi jam fuerant auisati* (Gomes 1959: 19). Secondly, the statement by the Serer contains a justification for their refusal to meet. The Africans had tried to understand the motives of the Portuguese. They feared not only assault, but cannibalism on the part of the Europeans. In these circumstances, they considered that trade with them would be dangerous.

During the initial period of assaults and pillaging, and later during battles that erupted as a result of the rejection of Portuguese offers of trade, the Africans paid close attention to the weapons of the Europeans. In addition to the caravels, their attention was drawn to their opponents' guns and crossbows. According to Ca da Mosto, in a battle on the banks of the Gambia River in 1455, the thunder of the guns frightened the African combatants, but their fear was assuaged when the stone shot was seen to fall into the water near the African boats without doing them much harm. The crossbows, whose projectiles brought death and whose range was considerable, made a much greater impression (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 83). Ca da Mosto claimed that, upon being shown the lethal nature of the crossbows and bombard shots, the Wolof – with whom peaceful trade had already been established – were astonished, and thought it was a 'devilish affair' – *cossa del diavolo* (Ca da Mosto-Leporace; 70). Presumably, the term 'devilish' represents the interpretation of the interpreter or that of Ca da Mosto himself, because while the concept of bad spirits exists in the religions of the people of West Africa, that of the devil does not (Mbiti 1969: 80–81; Piłaszewicz 2000: 78–80).

African sculptures that were made four or five decades later, and which depict the Portuguese, confirm the African perceptions reported in the written sources. A large number of the sculptures from both areas (Sierra Leone and Benin) portray Portuguese knights. The crossbow was an important item in their armament and appeared in these sculpted works (Bassani, Fagg 1988: 105, ill. 125 – Sierra Leone; Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: catalog no. 233 – Benin; see also fig. 4 in this book). The sculptures from Benin display, in addition, linstocks used to fire cannons and muskets (Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: catalog no. 10, 11 – linstocks, 233, 224, 236 – muskets; see also figs. 3, 6–7 in this book). In periods of conflict, therefore, the Portuguese were viewed by the Africans as dangerous invaders who were equipped with astounding and threatening weapons, to which they ascribed dark powers and magical attributes. In extreme interpretations of the behavior of the Portuguese they were seen as cannibals, because only as such could the Africans explain the purchase of slaves in large numbers.

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These views did not sap the Africans' fighting spirit, however. On the contrary, they took defensive steps, sometimes even attacking the new arrivals and attempting to chase them off.

When the Portuguese tried to improve the situation and establish peaceful ties, the Africans' distrust proved to be a difficult obstacle, as was the fear of retribution amongst those who had previously killed Europeans. Diogo Gomes, who had dispelled the fears of future trading partners by means of gifts, wrote about this. Talks and gifts made it possible to initiate regular trade contacts in this case as well (Gomes 1959: 31, 33).

Discussions between Africans and the Portuguese, and with other Europeans in Portuguese service, subsequently became more amicable and enduring, and made it possible for the two sides to present justifications for their actions. The available sources contain several descriptions of such talks: Valarte with Guitenyia in 1446–7; Ca da Mosto with Budomel in 1455, and with Mande chiefs on the banks of the Gambia River in 1456; Diogo Gomes with the same chiefs in about 1456 and 1459; the Bruges merchant Eustache Delafosse with the inhabitants of Aldeia das Duas Partes on the Mina Coast in 1480; and, lastly, the political negotiations between Diogo de Azambuja (an envoy of king João II) with Caramansa, the chief of the same village, in 1482. These represent just a small proportion of such meetings; there were many more, and they differed widely in terms of importance and the course they took. Only accounts which concerned meetings that were particularly important for the Portuguese were written and have survived to our day. This fact increases the credibility of the descriptions, despite their sketchy nature, and in these records we can find reflections of African perceptions of Europeans.

The Portuguese had several goals in their meetings and talks with the Africans, which met with a very varied response depending, in turn, on the goals of the Africans. The most common of these, one that animated the majority of talks, was commercial. This goal was shared by both sides and was based on knowledge of what the potential trading partner had to offer. Coming to an understanding was relatively easy. The list of goods that were attractive to the Europeans was rapidly established. It included gold, ivory, slaves, *malagueta* pepper and, additionally, natural scents and perfumes, exotic animals, and other singular objects. On the other hand, drawing up a list of European goods of interest to the Africans presented several obstacles. Many European objects aroused a sense of amazement and curiosity among the Africans, who ascribed magic powers to their makers and users. When Ca da Mosto hosted Budomel's envoys on his caravel, they were astonished and greatly delighted by bagpipes. The envoys stated:

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> recognizing that it was made by hand, they said that it was a divine instrument, made by God with his own hands.' […] [Observing the outfitting of the caravel] 'they said we must be great wizards, almost the equal of the devil, for men that journey by land have difficulty in knowing from place to place, while we journeyed by sea.' […] [Upon seeing candles and learning how to make them], 'they showed much wonderment, exclaiming that we Christians had knowledge of everything' (Crone 1937: 50–51).
>
> […] e visto pur che giera instrumento fato a man, dixeano quella esser cossa celestial e che Idio l'avea fata con le sue man […]. E poi dissea che nui altri dovevemo esser grandi incantadori e quasi comparabili al diavolo, digando che li homini che andavano per terra haveano faticha de andar da un luogo a l'altro, che nui andavemo per el mar […] rimaxeno molto admirativi, dicendo che tuto el saver de le cosse el giera in nui (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 70–72).

The problem came down to which objects the European rulers would agree to sell and which would be useful for Africans. These were two serious barriers. For example, weapons undoubtedly drew the Africans' interest, but Portugal's rulers prohibited their export to Africa (Ordenações do Senhor Rey D. Afonso V, Coimbra 1792: vol. 4, 63; Ordenações Manuelinas, Evora-Lisboa 1521: vol. 5, 81 – both cited by Saunders 1982: 12, 184; see also Thornton 1992: 45). This prohibition – which applied not only to firearms and crossbows, but also included swords and daggers – was violated only sporadically in the early period of Afro-European contact (Gomes 1959: 53, 55; Blake 1967: 203; Brooks 1993: 132–133, 141, 152; Mark, Horta 2011: 107–110). Some objects which had aroused astonishment, such as musical instruments and candles, were not traded for lack of commercial interest. The Africans' choice, therefore, fell on horses for their rulers and dignitaries, cloth, metal articles made mainly of copper and brass, and ornaments. In defining the goods they wanted to purchase, the Africans were appraising the European offer from the standpoint of their own needs and possibilities.

The Europeans directed discussions with Africans to a number of other issues. For example, they strove to obtain information about the African interior (Zurara-Soares: 447; Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 30–34; Gomes 1959: 37–41). Discussions on this topic do not generally reveal African opinions about Europeans. But the most important fact – related to the attitude of the former – was that they did not allow Europeans to penetrate the hinterland of the western part of the continent. This was the case for the entirety of West Africa, except for the Congo River Basin.

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The opinions of Africans were clearer during talks about religion. In keeping with the orders of their monarch, the Portuguese were to explore the possibility of converting the newly encountered peoples (Zurara-Soares: 64–65, 549–550; Brásio 1958; Russell 1960: 11, 22–23; Tymowski 2003). This aim, which was highly important for the Infante Dom Henrique, was not easily carried out by the knights and merchants. During the period of conflicts, only prisoners taken to Europe were baptized. Once more peaceful relations had been attained, the Europeans raised this issue as a complementary subject to the main, commercial motive of the discussions.

The reactions of Africans to these overtures varied. While they admired the arrivals' abilities and their many tools, the Africans ascribed the operation of the unknown objects to magic powers and to the intervention of the European god. But proposals to convert them were usually glossed over in silence by the Africans, and the topic was not explored during talks. This is what happened when Valarte presented to Guitenyia the translation of the letter Infante Dom Henrique had written to the (by him unknown) local ruler, which was devoted in large measure to the matter of conversion. Guintenyia stated that his paramount chief was away on war operations and that there was no way to reach him. He proposed trade instead. There were other leaders in the village besides Guintenyia, including a (supposed) priest, who were more hostile toward European influence. They brought about the killing of Valarte and of his companions. Similarly, Caramansa was silent about the question of conversion that was raised in a speech given by Diogo de Azambuja. On the other hand, he negotiated vigorously in the matter of the construction of a castle and tried to resist the Portuguese plan. In his detailed examination of these negotiations, Hair questions the credibility of this part of João de Barros's account, which talks of a proposal to accept baptism (Hair 1994a: 23).

The narrative by Ca da Mosto of his exchanges with Budomel contains the earliest and most extensive description of discussions on matters of faith, between him and the African ruler. Moreover, according to Ca da Mosto, it was Budomel who initiated these dialogues. The African ruler listened to the European merchant's explanations with interest. He then expressed the view that:

> Our faith appeared to him to be good: for it could be no other than God that had bestowed so many good and rich gifts and so much skill and knowledge upon us [but that He had not given us good laws]. He, on the contrary, had given them good laws, and he considered it reasonable that they would be better able to gain salvation than we Christians, for God was a just lord, who had granted us in this world many benefits of various kinds, but to the negroes, in comparison with us, almost nothing. Since

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> he had not given them paradise here, he would give it to them hereafter (Crone 1937: 41).

> [...] che la nostra fede el tegnia che la fosse bona perché el non poria esser altramente, perché Idio ne havea dado tante bone e riche cosse, e tanto inzegno e saver, che anchòra ne de'haver dado bona leze; ma che nientodimento anchòra lor havea bona leze; e che i tegnia che de bona rason lor Negri se podesse megio salvar che nui christiani, perché Idio era ìusto signor, e che a nui in questo modo havea dado tanti beni de diverse cosse, e a lor Negri quassi niente a rispeto nostro; e che pertanto Dio ne havea dado el paradiso a noi de qua, e che loro el doveria haver de là (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 57).

Budomel's nephew, Bisboror, also eagerly participated in discussions on religious matters with the Venetian merchant.

The above fragment of Ca da Mosto's account – even though it was written by a Christian and follows a Christian mindset – is exceptional and, for the early period of Portuguese expeditions, unique. Only in the 1480s and 1490s, i.e., about 30–40 years later, was the topic of conversion to Christianity broached with Bemoy, the ruler of the Wolof. Similar conversations took place with the chief of the Soyo province in Congo, and later with the ruler of Congo himself (Pina-MMA 1952: 32–35, 56–68, 112–116, 121–125; Resende-MMA 1952: 36–38, 69–74, 117–120, 126–129; Barros-Cidade: 85–89, 109–118; Barros-MMA 1952: 39–43, 78–85; see also Russell 1995b and Newitt 2010: 100–108). Ca da Mosto's account is full of details, and the exchange took place without any pressure. The Venetian merchant tried to understand Budomel, and the latter, similarly, tried to grasp the principles of Christian faith and to form an opinion about them. The aim of the Wolof ruler was most certainly to find an explanation for the origin of the Europeans' unusual abilities and to ascertain whether adopting Christianity would be beneficial for him. Whereas, during battles and conflict, the abilities of the Europeans were ascribed to magic, with an emphasis on evil and dangerous forces, during peace talks these powers were viewed differently. They were no longer evil, but puzzling, mysterious and creative; attempts were made to understand and, perhaps, to harness them. It should be added that Ca da Mosto, in turn, ascribed magic powers to his African partners (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 62–63). It cannot be ruled out that Budomel was also guided by considerations other than practical ones. His answers would seem to indicate that the religion of the Europeans did not satisfy him.

The interest shown by rulers of the Benin state in the religion of the Portuguese was based on other aims. Firstly, they were thinking of using the image

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of the Portuguese and relations with them to help shore up the splendor of their own power and of their dynasty. This is borne out in written, if scant, texts, and in Benin art (Barros-Cidade: 90; Dapper 1998: 11, 30; Plankensteiner, ed. 2007). Sculptures of the Portuguese and, above all, Portuguese knights, were placed on altars that were dedicated to rulers and their ancestors, along with sculptures of court dignitaries, servants, warriors, and battle scenes (Ben-Amos Garshick 2007: 151–159). Representations of the Portuguese were used to proclaim the glory of the *obas* of Benin. The *oba* and court of Benin apparently saw in the Europeans one more group of foreign peoples who had been subordinated to Benin. Secondly, conducting negotiations about welcoming the Portuguese religious mission – as took place in 1514 – also served a practical purpose for Benin's rulers. They wished to acquire firearms. The failure of those efforts led to the cessation of negotiations on religious matters (Ryder 1969: 41–53).

Another topic of talks and opinions expressed by the Africans was the appearance and behavior of the Europeans. Budomel and his dignitaries did not make any comments on Ca da Mosto's appearance, or Ca da Mosto did not record them doing so, but Budomel's ordinary subjects were surprised when the Venetian merchant visited the local market. The men and women who surrounded him were amazed at his white skin color, and attempted to wipe it off with their fingers. They thought Ca da Mosto's skin had been painted. Ca da Mosto's clothes and the cloth they had been made of, also aroused curiosity:

> My clothes were after the Spanish fashion, a doublet of black damask, with a short cloak of grey wool over it. They examined the woolen cloth, which was new to them, and the doublet with much amazement (Crone 1937: 49).

> el qual habito giera a la spagnola con un zupon de damascho negro e un mantelin de pano griso e guardavano el pano de lana che lor non l'àno, e quardavano el zupon, e molto se stupavano (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 68).

Ca da Mosto was a Venetian, but the attire of the Portuguese merchants was quite similar, as can be seen on the Benin sculptures (see below and figs. 8–9).

Presumably, the detailed interest of the Wolof in various types of cloth had to do with their familiarity with cotton, cotton weaving, and making garments using cotton cloth (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 45; Monteil 1926). Given this knowledge, the Wolof could appraise types of cloth unknown to them, and presumably wondered about their dissimilarity, their usefulness to them and, perhaps, their commercial value.

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The situation was different on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. No cotton was grown there and traditional attire, made of plant fibers, was usually limited to loincloths. Diogo de Azambuja's talks with Caramansa in 1482 took place only 11 years following the appearance of the Portuguese on this part of the coast. By then, some of the dignitaries in Caramansa's entourage were wearing costumes made of European cloth, but their servants still wore loincloths (Pina-MMA 1952: 11; Barros-Cidade: 79; Hair 1994a: 83–84, 89). Evidently, European cloth met with rapidly growing demand but its cost made it accessible only to the local elite. Pacheco Pereira writes about the import of cloth (Pacheco-Mauny: 124).

The Europeans' good clothes (and their habit of covering the body) were thus viewed positively by the Africans. As we have seen, Caramansa stated that de Azambuja's attire and the ornaments he wore must attest to the fact that he was a close relation of the Portuguese king. Caramansa then spoke a sentence which was telling in terms of the Africans' perception of Europeans. He said that he had already seen other Europeans who came to his village, but that 'they had been few, dirty and base' (according to Rui de Pina), or 'men poorly dressed and in tatters' (according to João de Barros). In addition, they were content with any goods the Africans would give them (Pina-MMA 1952: 12; Barros-Cidade: 82). The modest attire of the poor crew members is attested to by an ivory sculpture, presumably from Sierra Leone (see fig. 10).

Caramansa's observation clearly indicates (as does the above-mentioned sculpture) that the Africans ceased to treat Europeans as a socially homogenous group relatively quickly. They learned how to seek interlocutors and interesting trade partners among those Europeans who held power and riches. This does not mean, of course, that they didn't engage in small transactions with the poorer members of the crew. This corresponded to the attitude of the Europeans, who found trade partners not only among African rulers, but in chiefs and merchants, too.

The Africans' appraisal of the Europeans' behavior was based not only on the latter's appearance, attire, or greediness. They also observed and commented upon their attitudes toward women. We have few pronouncements on this subject, but they are telling. Only men took part in the early Portuguese expeditions to Africa. There were no women on the caravels, at least in principle. There is one official exception, however: the assignment of some women to the expedition of Diogo de Azambuja, which involved several hundred people. Three of them remained at the castle of Mina, along with the garrison of 60 men (Pina-MMA 1952: 14; Hair 1994a: 91–92).

The Africans not only noted this European interest in women, but tried to make use of it. During the earliest period of the Portuguese expeditions,

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African women would woo the invaders, seeking to draw them into a trap. The Europeans were careful, however (Zurara-Soares: 196–197). When trade began, the custom arose of preceding trade with an exchange of gifts. Budomel gave Ca da Mosto a young and very beautiful slave girl whom the Venetian merchant sent to the caravel and subsequently never mentioned (Ca da Mosto-Leporace: 50). He and other authors did not discuss intimate matters in their accounts, but the existence of such issues is indicated by the conversation we have already seen, during which Budomel inquired about ways to satisfy many women. Budomel was doubtless asking because he had seen the behavior of the Europeans when they came ashore. Women were also the subject of Delafosse's convoluted description of how he was tempted – successfully, it would seem – by women at Aldeia das Duas Partes (Delafosse-Escudier: 30).

African sculptures from the turn of the 15th century contain much information about the Africans' perception of differences between Europeans. As I have mentioned, these works originated from the region of Sierra Leone and Benin. Kathy Curnow has provided an interesting analysis of the image of the 'other' in these sculptures (Curnow 1990: 38–44; see also Blier 1993). She noted the African observation of and ability to represent social differences among the Portuguese. She used the examples of a dignitary, knight, and priest (I add to this a merchant, a servant, and a poor sailor.) Curnow also demonstrates the difference in how the Africans entered into contact with the Portuguese in both regions. In Sierra Leone the local segmentary society enabled closer contact than in Benin, which was a centralized state, and whose rulers decided about the extent of contact, limiting it to the economic, political and military spheres. I accept and draw upon Curnow findings.

I first concentrate on the purposes of the sculptures common to both regions. Both depict Portuguese dignitaries and knights. The former are shown with swords, in elegant embroidered robes, with ornate chains and pearl necklaces. They are often accompanied by servants and, at times, with a horse, a sign of particular prestige. The figures of the dignitaries have long, curly hair, and most of them have beards (Fagg 1959: ill. 7 and 16; Bassani, Fagg 1988: 160 – ill. 209, 163 – ill. 211, 179–181 – ill. 240–243; Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: catalog no. 38; see fig. 2 in this book).

The identification and presentation in art of these traits and attributes of Portuguese dignitaries was possible because the Africans observed the new arrivals carefully. We can compare those depictions with the description of Diogo de Azambuja's appearance that appears in several written sources, which raises the credibility of these works of art as sources of historical information.

Ordinary knights are presented with less pomp, but with their military paraphernalia, such as armor, helmets, swords, daggers, crossbows and, in the case

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of sculptures from Benin, muskets (see above, and figs. 3–4, 6–7), or even a small cannon (see fig. 5). I saw such a small portable cannon in 2019 at the Museum of Slavery located in the Gambian village of Albreda. It was from the 17th–18th century and was about 60 cm long. In the sculptures of both regions, the figures of Europeans with attributes of power, riches and military might outnumber other depictions. The message conveyed by these sculptures confirms the conclusions drawn from written sources: the Africans were especially concerned with the weapons, military prowess, and the power of Europeans.

Depictions of Portuguese merchants form an important group of the sculptures made in Benin. The little plaque destined to be hung on posts in the *oba*'s palace courtyard presents a Portuguese man (presumably a merchant), a boy, and a servant, in everyday attire deprived of ornaments (Bassani, Fagg 1988: 166, ill. 216; for a similar sculpture, see fig. 9 in this book). Merchants are portrayed in less sumptuous clothes, often without weapons, but accompanied by one of their principal goods brought from Europe to the Gulf of Guinea – brass bracelets called *manilhas* (Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: catalog no. 29, 30 – merchants with *manilhas*, 31 – a merchant with a stick, 10, 11 – figures with *manilhas* and linstocks for guns; for the appearance of *manilhas*, see fig. 11 in this book).

Manhilas were ornaments, but also a source of brass and a gauge of value, a form of currency. The placement of *manilhas* next to the figures of merchants or in their hands (see fig. 8) needs no commentary. One thing that may cause surprise is that in some Benin sculptures the merchants at times hold in their hands a linstock used to hold the match that fired the cannon rounds. It means that although Africans from Benin recognized the merchants' commercial function, they also associated them with European weapons and military power.

The artifacts from Benin also include sculptures that depict the daily life of the Portuguese in Africa. One splendid sculpture of a musketeer stands on a base, the side of which is adorned with a scene of a Portuguese drinking party (Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: catalog no. 231, a description of a figure and base covered with sculpted scenes by Sylvia Dolz: 450–451). The threatening power of the musketeer is here confronted with a depiction of the Europeans' daily life, and perhaps even their vices and weaknesses.

In contrast, only in the art of Sierra Leone do we find a depiction of a Christian priest and missionary (Curnow 1990: 41, ill. 4; see fig. 12 in this book). Its absence in the art of Benin confirms our knowledge about the failure of missionary efforts in this area. The missionary from Sierra Leone is shown in austere robes, with a modest hairstyle, and in a gesture of prayer.

More importantly, there are telling differences between the sculptures of Sierra Leone and those of Benin with regard to the position of the Portuguese

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within local society. In the work from Sierra Leone, they are often depicted together with Africans, with servants, and at times in the company of women (Bassani, Fagg 1988: ill. 28, 42, 43, 156, 186; Curnow 1990: 41). This reflects real situations, especially that of the *lançados* in segmentary and centralized societies. They settled in Sierra Leone and joined the life of local communities, often taking local women as wives. The *lançados* and their descendants were usually bilingual, and were therefore employed as intermediaries in African-Portuguese contacts. This was reflected in the sculptures of Sierra Leone that were made for sale, which were created through the mediation of the *lançados* (Curnow 1990*: 39*). The *lançados* could occupy the position they did because the political organization of the communities in Sierra Leone was not centralized. Neither early forms of the state nor of chiefdoms emerged there. Instead, it comprised segmentary organizations of independent villages (Brooks 1987). According to Brooks, the inclusion, even immersion, of individual *lançados* into this type of social structure was more possible than in centralized states. In addition, the interest shown by local peoples in trade contacts with the Portuguese created opportunities for employment for the *lançados.* In buying European products, Africans offered in exchange a costly item that was especially prized by the Europeans – ivory. This was not limited to tusks, but included the above-mentioned ivory sculptures with carved scenes, often made to special order for the Portuguese.

The production of art in the state of Benin was completely different. The majority of the sculptures in bronze and in the form of sculpted elephant tusks were made for the court of the Benin rulers. Local associations of sculptors were supervised and controlled by these rulers (Egharevba 1960: 79, 81–82; Inneh 2007: 103–117). As we have seen, depictions of the Portuguese were placed on the rulers' altars as evidence of their superiority over the arrivals, and of the subordination of the Portuguese within the *oba's* own kingdom to the aims of his policy. It was not in the interest of the *oba* to portray the new arrivals together with local society. For this reason, according to Curnow's analysis, the Portuguese in Benin sculptures were shown separately. There are figures of individual knights and musketeers, and bas-reliefs of merchants or Portuguese hunting leopards (Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: catalog no. 236 and commentary by Stefan Eisenhofer). These scenes do not include their African partners. The only exceptions are the reliefs that show the *oba* surrounded by dignitaries and servants with, in the background, a small bas-relief head of a Portuguese knight (Ekpo, Willet 1980: 139; Plankensteiner, ed. 2007: 136, catalog no. 62, and description by Osarhieme Benson Osadolor; see also figs. 13, 18 in this book). Of course, these compositions reflected the hierarchy of the figures and the idea of the subordination of the arrivals to the *oba.*

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In Benin, similarly to Sierra Leone, the individual traits of the Portuguese figures were not shown. Facial features were depicted in a schematic manner. According to the terminology proposed by Curnow, these depictions of the 'other' were created by means of a symbolic treatment of attributes. They defined the presented person's cultural and social affiliation, and not that person's individual traits.

The representation of Europeans, individually or in groups, and the objects they used, does not exhaust the content of this form of African art. According to Thiago Mota, the sculptures reflect not only Africans' knowledge about Europeans, but also a wider vision of the world. The Sapi sculptors from Sierra Leone combined images of Europeans with images of local men and women, images of African animals and plants, and images of wonders of the imagination (see figs. 12, 15, 17). In Benin, sculptors presented the Portuguese in conjunction with depictions of leopards and other African animals (figs. 4, 7). According to Mota, this connection means that the art that was produced on the coasts of West Africa at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries was part of a process by which Africans living there broadened their geographical and cultural horizons. It testifies to the fact that both sides – African and European – established lasting cultural contacts, and also demonstrates that African artists were aware of the difference between their own culture and that of the arrivals. This art was a form and an expression of the Africans' participation in the creation of the Atlantic world and even, according to Mota, part of the modern process of globalization (Mota 2018: 87–88).

While the written source material we have is modest and sketchy, this does not preclude the possibility of moving from distinct and incidental descriptions of various behaviors and statements to conclusions of a general nature. On the contrary, the variety of the source material is what makes it so valuable. Both types of sources – written and iconographic – emerged entirely independently from one another. But the similarity of the information in these distinct sources increases their significance as historical evidence. This is particularly true of the written accounts that related African opinions indirectly, were dependent on the level of understanding of what the Africans said, and were influenced by the European authors' interests. Where these descriptions are in agreement with the information conveyed by African sculptures, I find that these texts are credible.

From the 1430s to the beginning of the 16th century, contacts between Europeans and the inhabitants of the Coast of West Africa underwent many changes, which affected the type of contacts, their frequency, and their intensity. Alongside these developments, the attitudes, opinions, and statements of different African individuals and groups about Europeans also changed. These

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were initially spontaneous responses made *ad hoc* to unexpected encounters and heightened emotions. The source material, however random and fragmentary, gives voice to Africans of very different social standing.

After the assaults and battles with the Portuguese ceased, contacts became in large measure regulated. During meetings, longer discussions were held and the pronouncements of African became more abundant and adapted to the new phase in cultural contacts. They were based on a better understanding of their European trading partners. The aim of Africans became to expand and develop this acquaintance.

During the first phase of contacts, to some extent Africans interpreted the arrival of the Europeans within their understanding of the natural world (caravels as birds or fish, for example), and the magical world (the military power of the Europeans was ascribed to magical powers). In the second stage, Africans adapted their opinions and attempted to find rational explanations for the unfamiliar. During this period of peaceful discussions, the social standing changed of those Africans whose descriptions of Europeans were recorded. The people who conducted trade and political negotiations were mostly rulers, chiefs of chiefdoms and villages, and merchants. The sources of this period capture few instances of speech by people of low social standing. This does not mean that such people did not have opinions about the arrivals, but for the Portuguese, who were interested in negotiations and trade, and for the authors of the accounts and chronicles, it was the opinion of African elites that mattered. The creators of the sculptures should also be seen as an exceptional, if not elite, group in their societies.

The views of Africans about Europeans between the 1430s and the beginning of the 16th century had not yet become stereotyped, although in African art sculpted European figures were often represented without individual features. African societies were flexible and creative in their interpretations of encounters with Europeans and their opinions of them evolved as their interactions with them improved and cultural contact increased. Stereotypes emerged only gradually during the course of the 16th century, parallel to the stereotypization of European views about Africans.

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Conclusions

The establishment of contacts between the Portuguese and other Europeans in their service and the inhabitants of the West African coast, and the subsequent mutual familiarity that developed during the course of the 15th and early 16th centuries, preceded similar contacts in other parts of Africa and on other continents in the later course of the 16th and 17th centuries. For this reason, these initial experiences were an important phenomenon for the European and West African civilizations alike. To a degree, they also had an impact on Europe's later dealings with the Americas and Asia.

In the Middle Ages, Europeans had long known about the realm of Islam, and had maintained very active trade with regions of the Levant, North Africa, and, for a long time, the Muslim parts of the Iberian Peninsula. Numerous European pilgrims traveled to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, which for nearly 200 years after the end of the 11th century were the destination of repeated Crusades. At the same time, the Europeans benefited from the achievements of Islamic civilization, especially in the field of culture. The Europeans' contact with the regions of Middle and Far East was much less vigorous. The expeditions and embassies sent by Pope Innocent IV and the king of France, Louis IX, to the center of the Mongol Empire following the 13th-century Mongol invasions were exceptional and sporadic in nature, and accounts from these voyages were known to a narrow group within the European elite. In the area of trade, Europe's business with the Middle and Far East, especially with India, the source of spices, took place through the intermediary of Egypt and territories of the Levant. Marco Polo's expedition to China was an exceptional event, although it was probably not the only one. Europeans therefore knew about Asia, but the information they had was scanty and accessible only to the power elite and a small number of merchants. The Europeans' encounters with the peoples of West Africa in the 15th century were of an entirely different character.

By Europeans on the West African coast in the 15th century, I mean mostly the Portuguese and the Italians who worked for them, as well as a few individuals from Castile and Flanders who sought to break the Portuguese monopoly on contact with Africa. The Portuguese sought to hide some of the knowledge they had gathered, especially at the initial stage of expansion, but this information leaked out. As a state and society, Portugal was part of the relatively homogenous European civilization, which meant that news about Africa spread throughout Europe effectively. The earliest places to learn of it were Castile, Italy, Flanders, Burgundy, and the German countries.

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The culture, economy, and social and political organization of the numerous peoples who inhabited the coast and hinterland of West Africa were far more varied than in Europe. Despite this great diversity, the area of West Africa south of the Sahara is considered to be one of a number of great regions of African civilization, with its own distinct traits. In truth, the Saharan culture of the Berber and Arab nomads, the peoples who lived in the desert oases, and the fishermen who inhabited the Saharan coasts of Africa differed from sub-Saharan cultures, but these two areas had been connected by trade, migrations, and strong developmental co-dependence since at least the seventh and eighth centuries. These factors seem to justify the use of the general term 'West Africa,' without prejudice to the many differences between the many West African peoples who came into contact with Europeans in the 15th and early 16th centuries.

As they arrived on the African coast and progressed further south, the Portuguese came across peoples who were, from their viewpoint, entirely unknown. Moreover, this contact led to regular trade, which lasted uninterruptedly through the decades examined in this book and during subsequent centuries. These trade relations have changed in form but have lasted till the present day. The consequences of the earliest contacts thus continue to affect us, as do the motives behind them, the experiences, the manner in which the Portuguese proceeded, and the results they achieved.

The first meetings between the Europeans and Africans in the 15th century were unexpected on both sides. They were taken aback by the sight of the other and had to respond in keeping with their respective abilities, imagination, interests, and the course of a given meeting. These encounters were accompanied by strong emotions triggered by surprise, followed by uncertainty and hesitation about what decisions to take, which depended on whether the contacts were marked by aggression and violence or by offers to collaborate.

From 1434 to the beginning of the 16th century – during the 70 years examined in this book – the relationship between the Europeans and Africans evolved over the following stages: (1) initial aggression on the part of the arrivals, conflict and battles; (2) attempts to gather information about the adversary/partner and gradual bilateral exploration of one side by the other; (3) the establishment of peaceful ties through common feasts, exchanging presents, training interpreters, and initiating negotiations; (4) the definition of trading areas and other forms of collaboration that could be accepted by both sides; (5) the emergence of groups interested in collaboration; (6) the emergence of groups who settled in the territories of the other, either under compulsion (African slaves taken to Portugal) or voluntarily (the *lançados* and *tangomaos*), and who were subjected to processes of acculturation and assimilation.

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The way in which mutual contact and collaboration evolved affected the perspective of the Europeans and Africans alike. An image of 'the other' – of the African as 'the other' in European eyes, and of the European as 'the other' as viewed by Africans – emerged gradually. Growing familiarity introduced nuances in the initial uniform image of the other side. The Europeans noted and described linguistic, economic, social, and cultural differences among the Africans. They also became acquainted with their different types of political organization. In keeping with the terminology in use today, these were the centralized state, chiefdoms, and segmentary systems of independent villages. But in describing these differences, the authors of the 15th- and 16th-century descriptions struggled to find appropriate terms and notions. Such diversity of political organization had existed in early medieval Europe, but by the time of the Portuguese expeditions to Africa it had mostly disappeared and was unknown to Europeans, especially those in Western Europe. For this reason, in relation to Africa, they most often made use of European terms, adding relevant commentary. An example of these attempts was the phrase 'each of these villages has its own king,' used to describe the organization that we now call segmentary.

In contrast, the concept of trade and associated communications were familiar to both and were practiced throughout West Africa. The European term 'market' corresponded exactly to the institutions of trade that the Europeans encountered and got to know in West Africa. The curiosity of the Europeans and their inquisitiveness (presumably connected with missionary projects) also concerned matters of faith, ceremony, cult and sculptures of local deities. In this respect terminological difficulties were not as great as in matters of political organization. However, the assessments of local beliefs conducted by the European authors were negative, and the hopes for baptizing the pagans were greater than the capacity of the missionaries or the results their efforts produced.

Equally, from the very first contacts, the Africans sought to discover who the unexpected arrivals were. Still at the stage of conflicts and battles, some locals dared to board the caravels in order to find out as much as possible and then flee back to shore with the information they had retrieved. Some Africans went so far as to travel voluntarily to the arrivals' place of origin – one which was entirely unknown to them. Information was also gathered by the envoys of West African rulers who came to Portugal. There is no trace of their accounts, and we can only imagine that as they reported to their rulers they ran into terminological difficulties, just as the Europeans had, when describing what they had seen and experienced.

After permanent trade had been established, the Africans' knowledge about the Portuguese and other arrivals grew considerably. A telling testimony of this

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are the Sapi/Temne sculptures from the area of Sierra Leone and Edo sculptures from the area of the Benin state, which depict the Portuguese. The Africans observed and portrayed the social differences they had noted among the arrivals. They sculpted dignitaries with their insignia and retinues, knights with their arms, merchants and their servants, and even poor sailors offering only one object for sale. Only rarely did they depict a cleric. This book's index, which contains the names and functions of the Portuguese who participated in the expeditions to Africa, as given by written sources, confirms the same social divisions among the Portuguese that the Africans had noted. The African artists also sculpted what was of greatest interest to them: caravels and their equipment, firearms and bladed weapons, crossbows, parade attire and ornaments, and the daily clothing worn by caravel crews. European accounts of talks with the Africans confirm the interests and observations reflected in African sculptures. Moreover, they add information about numerous questions asked by Africans about the functioning of various devices, about European customs and matters of faith.

The unexpected first encounters, conflicts, battles, and mutual discovery gave rise on both sides to strong and at times violent emotions and feelings. The chronicler Zurara saw this shared experience as proof of the humanity of Europeans as well as Africans. During battles, fear – and its opposite, courage – was felt, as well as despair when colleagues were killed, and pride when the adversary was vanquished or killed or, in the case of the Portuguese, taken into slavery. During this period an important ethos emerged among the conquerors and organizers of the expeditions. It was the belief that deliberate cruelties were justified by higher ends, for example, the intention to baptize pagans and to save their souls. We don't know if similar attitudes existed among the Africans because there are no records of this. We have a few indications among interpreters' translations, for example, that Europeans were seen as the incarnation of evil, but this view was justified in light of the assaults and pillaging they conducted. When these actions ceased, such accusations were not renewed.

This great charge of negative emotions was short-lived, however. From the beginning they were accompanied, and even mitigated, by other feelings, above all mutual curiosity and the desire to get to know the adversary, who later became a partner. In Europe, this curiosity was not felt by the Portuguese alone, but by other Europeans, too. Merchants of other countries came to Portugal, as did scholars (from Italy and Nuremberg, for example), envoys and emissaries from European rulers (like the Silesian knight Niclas von Popplau, in the service of the Emperor), Papal legates and bishops. News about the expeditions to Africa and about their results spread throughout Europe. In addition

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to the material motive – seeking trade advantages – curiosity played an important role. The Infante Dom Henrique sustained it by sending presents of valuable and unusual objects. Interesting objects from Africa, including sculptures of local gods (the term 'idols' was used) were sold in Flanders. Such strange gifts were sent to the Holy See and the court of Burgundy. The Portuguese became the precursors in Europe of the collection of cabinets of curiosities, and of the modern culture of the 16th and 17th centuries, which Krzysztof Pomian called 'the culture of curiosity.' Among Africans as well there was curiosity and there were attempts to understand how European objects (caravels, crossbows, candles, bagpipes, etc.) functioned. But goods such as cloth, metal products, cooper in the form of *manilhas* and horses were sold to Africans. After they were purchased, they served as marks of prestige but not as curiosities.

Gradually, both sides got used to the objects and the customs that had initially evoked surprise, and they learned to accept the distinct character of the other as something obvious. African women who became partners of the Europeans who lived in Africa played an important role in the acquaintanceship process. These relations were forced in the case of slaves, or voluntary in the case of free women, especially the wives of the *lançados*.

In cultural contacts between two or more sides, the size of the groups that participate in these contacts, and their composition, are very important. The Europeans – mainly Portuguese – who arrived on the West African coast were not numerous, although their numbers grew during the course of the 15th century. It can be estimated hypothetically that several thousand Europeans visited Africa annually in the last decades of the 15th century. In addition, the same people could take part in several expeditions. These were above all young men; the number of European women on the expeditions was negligible. As for the West Africans, the entire population of the coast took part in the contacts, even if the character of those contacts was different: rulers of African states and chiefs, other dignitaries, merchants – including those from the hinterland – and petty traders at the market, ordinary farmers, fishermen or herders. Both men and women participated.

In addition to direct contact, whose effects I have tried to describe and assess, there was the indirect form. There were the people who had found out about the other from people who had come into direct contact with them. The spread of information was relatively rapid in Europe and is reflected in the sources. Similarly, there is testimony from West Africa about the circulation of information, which was more evident in areas near the coast. Trade routes that linked coastal areas with the hinterland played an especially important role in this transmission. However, we don't know how much of this information got through and to what degree it was distorted as the distance from the coastal

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areas lengthened. We know with certainty that certain trade routes were redirected and ran from the interior toward places where meeting Europeans was likely. This was the case with a branch of the trans-Saharan route, which was redirected toward Arguim. Likewise, the route of the Dioula traders was redirected toward Mina. Indirect information suggests that were also routes which ran from the interior toward the lower course of the Gambia and São Domingos rivers.

The two sides' mutual and direct contacts and the shaping of their views was based – for both Europeans and Africans – on the real experience of contacts and not on preconceived views. In the case of the Europeans, their expectations and preconceived views of Africans, based on reports from classical antiquity, proved contrary to the reality they discovered. For the Africans, the encounters were a surprise and novelty, except when news of the visitors had preceded their appearance by a year or two. Such news would have been passed from one people inhabiting the coast to another and to the next. Undoubtedly, information about the Portuguese was also passed on to people who lived in the West African hinterland. It spread along trade routes used by the Dioula and other merchant groups. However, in these instances the message was indirect in nature and the accounts were not based on experience, especially in areas remote from the coast.

From the very first meetings, the Europeans and Africans immediately assumed that they were obviously dealing with human beings. However, they saw and described, or presented in sculptural art, very large differences between themselves. The meetings were a significant experience for both sides, faced with new cultures, beliefs, customs, work methods, and purposes. We do not know exactly how West Africans reacted to this expansion in their knowledge. The Europeans were given cause to reflect on what defines the human community, the nature of humanity. In the event, each side gradually accepted the dissimilarity of the other.

The drive to get to know each other produced attitudes of openness toward the diversity they saw, a willingness to understand the other, and a desire to achieve goals in collaboration. They did not consider the differences between them to be evil, and no violent attempts were made to change them. Perhaps the tolerance in question resulted from the equal strength of the parties. The Europeans were better armed, they held the advantage in battle, but the Africans, being more numerous, were able to block the Europeans from penetrating the West African hinterland. Trade in particular called for peace, a cessation of fighting, for acceptance of the differences of the other side, and for the creation of a sense of security and the ability to use information about the other. Acceptance of the Europeans was easier for the Africans; even before

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the 15th century, their cultures had had contacts with other peoples, as can be seen in the existence of languages that were used as a lingua franca by people of different cultures. Irrespective of the reason, however, such an attitude of openness had an impact not only on the situation in West Africa. Some of its elements, above all the desire to discover, would be seen in subsequent decades and centuries.

Even in the specific West African situation of the 15th and early 16th centuries, open-mindedness was not the only characteristic of the relationship. It co-existed with a desire for profit, with an instrumental regard for the other, a sense of separateness on both sides, and a sense of superiority on the part of the Europeans. The slave trade gave rise to and perpetuated among Europeans a ruthlessness and indifference to suffering, a reflection of which was the widespread use of the term *peças* (pieces) when counting slaves. The initial spontaneous expressions of compassion by the people of Lagos when witnessing the offloading of the first bulk slave shipment were quickly forgotten. For the Africans, the slave trade caused feelings of despair among the people who had been abducted and sold, as well as among their loved ones. This is evident in texts written by Europeans, despite their indifference to the slaves' suffering. Moreover, the slave trade grew, and the number of slaves imported to Portugal increased during the course of the 15th century and in the beginning of the 16th century. The organizational and technical foundations for the future massive transatlantic slave trade were being laid. And so were its psychological foundations: acceptance of such trade, insensitivity to suffering, and even justifications arguing for the righteousness of the slave trade and of accepting its pursuit to generate material profit.

The transition from the assault, fighting and pillage stage to that of organized trade may seem to be a solely positive development, but it is multifaceted and complex and calls for a differential assessment. Trade between areas and peoples with different types of strengths could create conditions of exploitation and lead to a deepening of such differences. Moreover, since the time of the very first contacts, slaves had been the principal commodity exported from West Africa (besides gold). Purchasing them allowed for larger deliveries to Portugal than capturing them during an attack. Bulking up this trade was fully accepted by the Europeans and African slave suppliers, being highly profitable for both sides. The traders did not take into account the above-mentioned suffering, and even less so any consequences that reached beyond *ad hoc* profits.

In this book, the study of the mentality of both sides – the Europeans and the Africans – is limited to the period of the 15th to the early 16th century. For obvious reasons, people of the day could not perceive and assess the long-term consequences of their relations. They did not have, on either side, the

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conceptual apparatus required to make such assessments. It is impossible to ignore, however, that today we know that the European-African trade – with its structure, range of goods exported from West Africa and imported to it, and pricing system – was for centuries highly unfavorable for Africa and Africans, and deepened developmental differences. Over the long run, this trade proved to be a very dangerous tool of exploitation.

At the turn of the 15th century, limits to the above-mentioned open-mindedness, willingness to discover and acceptance of the other began to emerge. This was especially true for the Europeans and was due to their failure to convert the Africans. Missionary aims were important for both the Infante Dom Henrique and later for King João II. The conversion of pagans was written about zealously by the chroniclers of the expeditions – Gomes Eanes de Zurara, Rui de Pina, Garcia de Resende, and later by Duarte Pacheco Pereira and João de Barros – who summarized the achievements of the Portuguese expeditions. However, the effectiveness of missionary efforts on the coasts of West Africa was negligible (in contrast – one should add – to the situation in the Congo). The attitude of the Africans themselves was of key significance in this respect. The hopes of baptizing the rulers of the Wolof and of Benin proved to be in vain, because the rulers in those states treated the negotiations and the missionaries as instrumental to their needs. In addition, there were discrepancies between the goals of the Portuguese rulers and those of their subjects operating on their behalf in Africa. The latter were primarily interested in victory in battle and in spoils, and only then in organizing beneficial trade relations. In the primary instance, conversion was impossible. In the second, it was possible only with the consent of the Africans, who were reluctant. It is thus mainly the slaves who were brought to Portugal who were converted.

It was most probably at the turn of the 15th century that the knowledge gathered about the other side was judged to be sufficient to engage effectively in trade, while other reasons to increase this knowledge became less important. Moreover, some of the European authors expressed disappointment with the failure of the missionary plans and reverted to the views held in the 1430s and 1440s by writing about the barbarism of the Africans. The 15th-century cognitive impulse that had marked the encounters between Europeans and Africans on the West African coast grew weaker, and simplified and stereotypical views began to appear. These developments were accompanied by geopolitical changes in the early 16th century related to the arrival of the Portuguese in India and with the establishment there of the Estado da India. Portugal thereafter focused its attention on the region of the Indian Ocean, on India, on the eastern coast of Africa and, in addition, on the Congo. The West African coast began to lose its importance. The arrival of Europeans in America, and in

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particular the sudden expansion of the transatlantic slave trade that followed it, had similar consequences. West Africa became one of the principal areas supplying slaves. Starting with the 1520s and 1530s, this led to a shift in European attitudes toward Africans, but also of the converse. During the early period of contacts examined in this book, relations between the two sides were more balanced than they later became: attitudes on both sides were characterized by a desire to learn and by mutual acceptance. These initial attitudes were pushed aside, however, by the rise of the large-scale slave trade.

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Figures and Maps

Figures

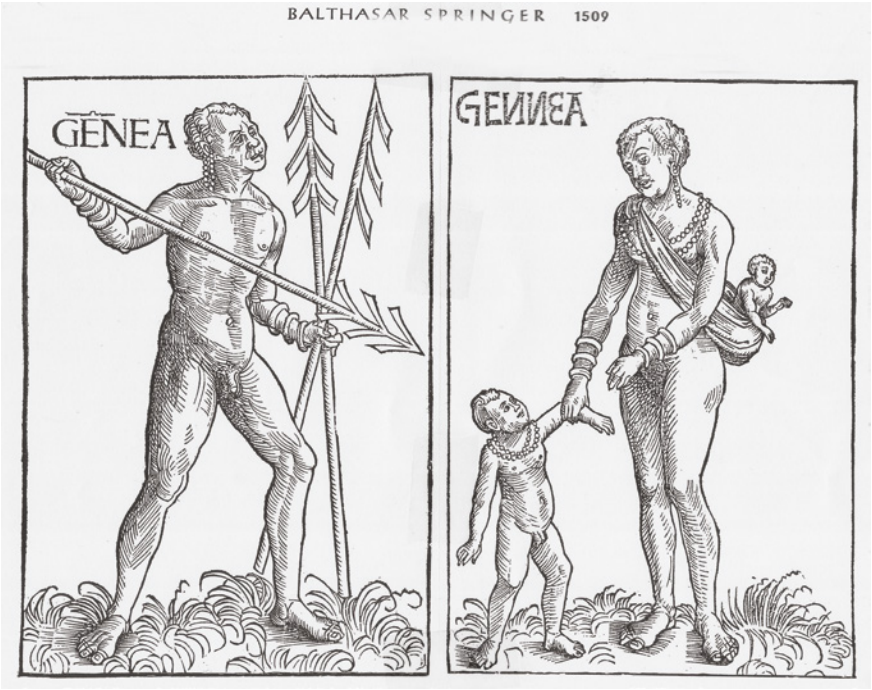

FIGURE 1 Figures of a Guinean man, a woman, and children – woodcuts by Hans Burgkmair, 1509

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FIGURE 2 A Portuguese dignitary and his suite – Sierra Leone ivory saltcellar, end of the 15th to early 16th century.

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FIGURE 3 Portuguese musketeer – Benin bronze, 16th century.

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FIGURE 4 Portuguese crossbowman – Benin bronze, 16th century.

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FIGURE 5
Portuguese knight with small cannon – Benin bronze, presumably 16th century.

FIGURE 6
Portuguese knight with a linstock to fire cannon – Benin bronze, 16th century.

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FIGURE 7 Mounted Portuguese knight with a linstock – Benin bronze, 16th–17th century.

FIGURE 8
Portuguese merchant holding a *manilha* – Benin bronze, 16th century.

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FIGURE 9 Portuguese merchant and two of his servants – Benin bronze, 16th century.

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FIGURE 10 Ordinary crew member of a Portuguese caravel holding a manilha – part of an ivory saltcellar – Sierra Leone, end of the 15th–early 16th century.

FIGURE 11 A *manilha* – bronze brass ring.

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FIGURE 12 Clergyman in prayer – sculpted elephant tusk – Sierra Leone, end of the 15th to early 16th century.

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FIGURE 13 Figure of a Benin dignitary surrounded by his suite, with the heads of two Portuguese knights – Benin bronze, 16th to 17th century.

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FIGURE 14 Caravel at anchor, part of an ivory saltcellar – Sierra Leone, end of the 15th to early 16th century.

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FIGURE 15 African women whose bodies are covered with scarifications – Sierra Leone ivory saltcellar, end of the 15th to early 16th century.

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FIGURE 16 Three naked male figures covered with scarifications – Benin bronze, 16th to 17th century.

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FIGURE 17 Women in erotic poses – Sierra Leone, ivory saltcellar, end of the 15th to early 16th century.

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FIGURE 18 Two Portuguese men drinking alcohol presented in the background of a Benin court scene – Benin bronze, presumably 16th century.

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FIGURE 19 Katherina, a 20-year-old black slave – drawing by Albrecht Dürer, 1521.

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FIGURE 20 Contemporary view of the castle in Elmina
a from the outside.
b inside the courtyard showing the oldest part of the castle.

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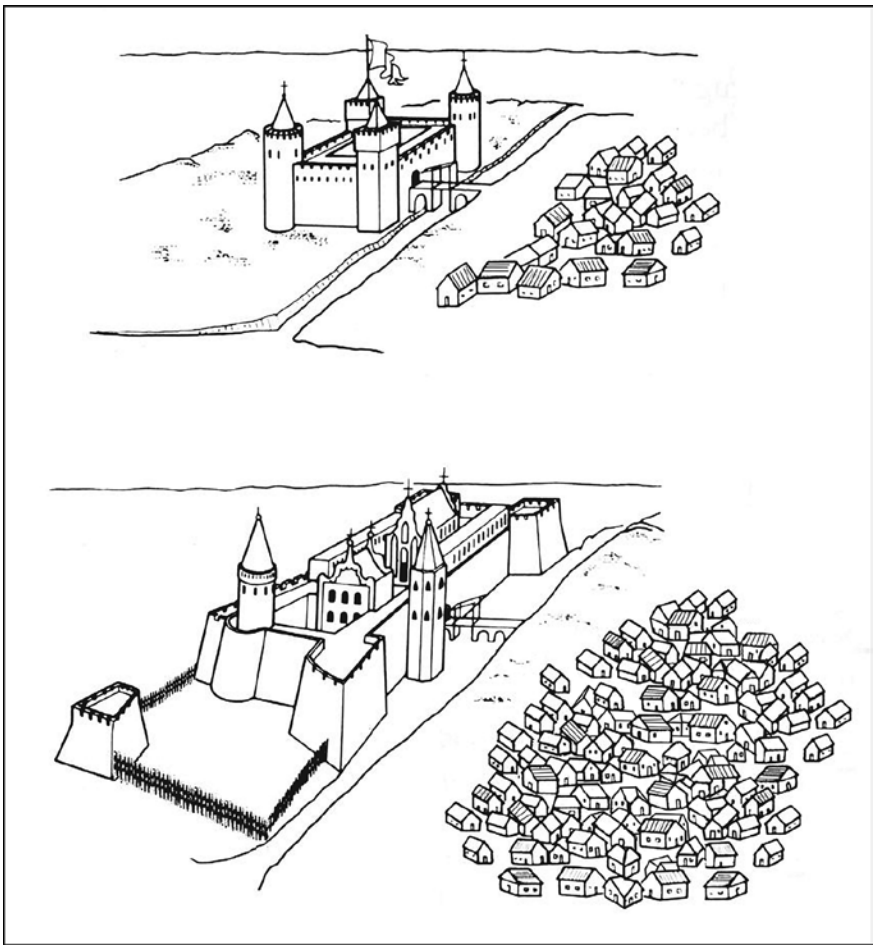

FIGURE 21 Sketch showing the evolution of the castle of São Jorge da Mina – 15th and 17th centuries.

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FIGURE 22 Trade on the West African coast – copperplate engraving in the work by Olfert Dapper, 1686.

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PIETER DE MAREES 1605
N. 4
A
B
C
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R
S
La description de la figure No. 4. 24
Ceſte pourtraicture demonſtre le marche de Cabo Corſo ſituee vne groſſe lieue al' Eſt du Chaſteau de Mina vng lieu de commerce, fort bon, & a cauſe que ceſt le plus beau marche de tous les aultres endroictz, j'auens nous mis icy. A Eſt la maiſon ou reſidence du Capitaine de ceſte place B. Eſt la logeste ou grainge ou que le Capitaine tient ſon millet. C Eſt le marché aux Bannanas ou fruictz auecq la place ou quon vend la chair, D. Eſt vne loge ou que les villageois auecq leurs pots a vin de Palma viennent aſſeoir deſſoubz, E. Eſt le marche a poullailles F. Eſt le marche a poiſſon G. Eſt la marche du Bois. H. Eſt le marche ou quon trouue a vendre le Riz & Millet I. Eſt lendroict ou que leau freſche eſt a vendre K. Eſt le marche ou quon veud les Cannes a Sucre L. Icy me ſure on la toille de Hollande a braſſees, ainſi que les villageois ſont achaptée es nauires & apporté en terre & la revendent icy M. Eſt le droict ou que les femmes du Chaſteau de Mina ſont aſiſes auec leurs kanties a vendre N. Eſt la table de ſacrifice de leur dieu Fetiſſos. O Sont les Hollandois traverſans le marche pour y achapter quelque choſe P. Eſt la garde du Capitaine qui va auecq ſes armes Q. Eſt le chemin vers le riuage de la mer R. Eſt le chemin vers foetu & aultres villes du pais.

FIGURE 23 Market on the Mina Coast – copperplate engraving in the work by Pieter de Marees, 1605.

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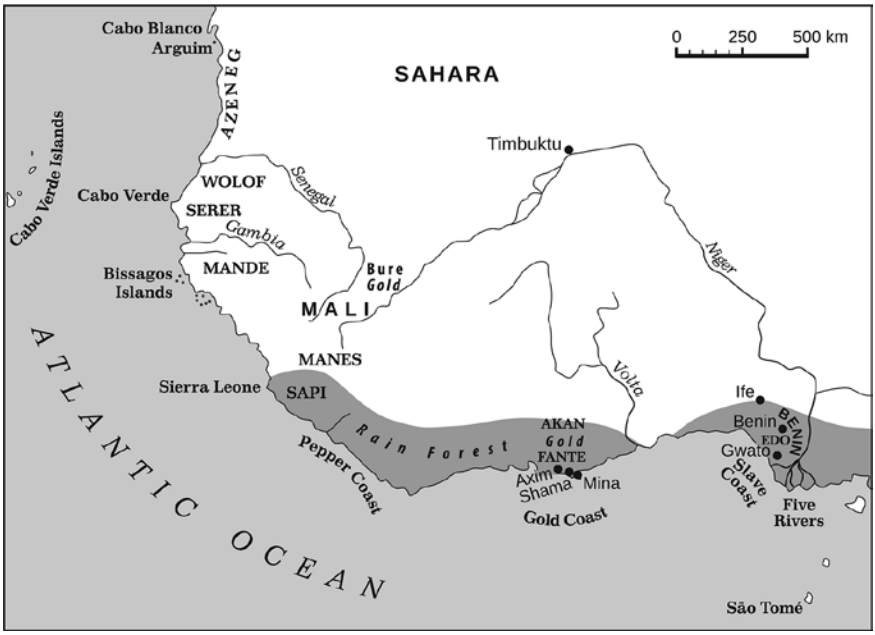
Maps



MAP 1 West African coast during the early Portuguese expansion in the 15th century.

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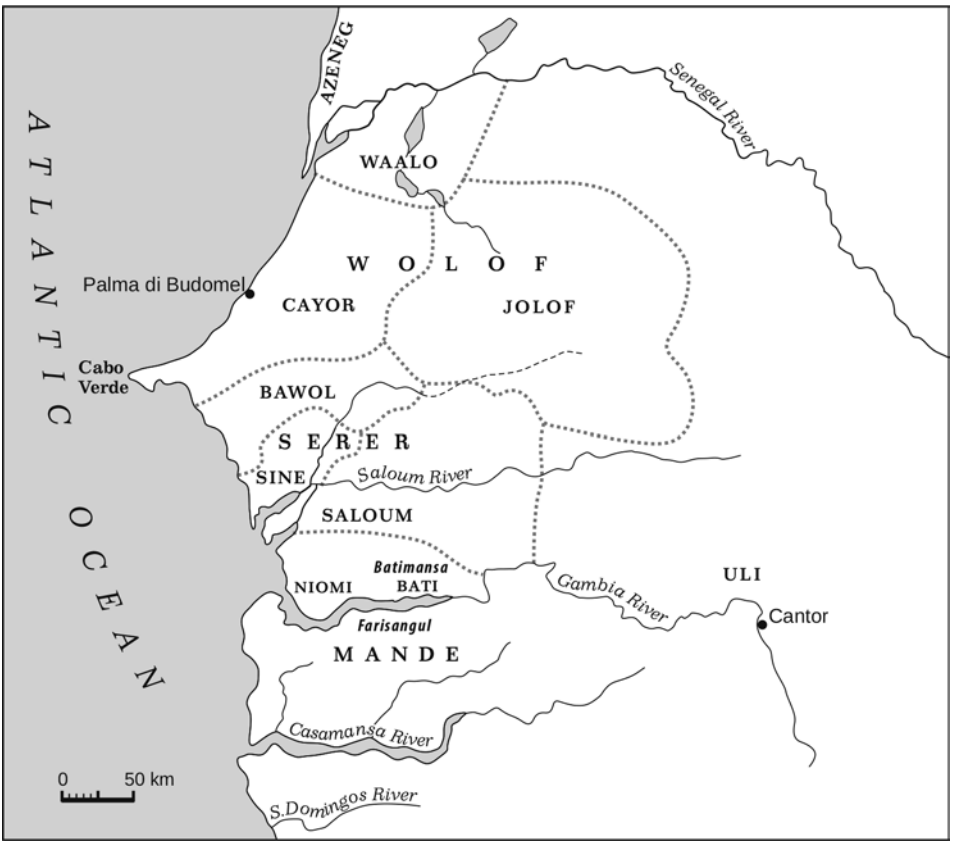

MAP 2 The Senegambia in the 15th century.

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